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A MANUAL OF BRAHMA RITUALS & DEVOTIONS

SITANATH TATTVABHUSAN

SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ

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SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ
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PREFACE

The following Manual of Brahmo Ritual and Devotions, is offered only as a suggestive model. It is not intended to supplant the spontaneous expression of thought and sentiment, even in the case of those who may like or approve it. It is meant to show something of the direction which, in the opinion of the writer and compiler our thoughts, fellings, words and practices should take on the more solemn occasion of our individual and communal life. As we are all living under the influence of a common inspiration.—a common dispensation of Providence,—it can naturally be expected that the words of a single individual,—one who has long lived and moved in the spiritual atmosphere of the Brahmo Samaj and has taken some parts in its work—will represent to a considerable extent the ideas and aspirations of the community. No one will be more glad than the author of this manual if its tentative and partial use,—the only use for which it is intended—leads to a desire for and an edeavour after the preparation of a more suitable manual.

In preparing it the writer and compiler has carefully consulted, (a) two current manuals of orthodox Hindu Ritual and Devotions, (b) the *Anusthan Paddhati* of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, and (c) Brahmananda Keshavchandra Sen's *New Samhita.* A little tract named *Brahmo Dharma Tattva*, published by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Office, has also been of some use to him. The orthodox

manuals could given him but little help. They were drawn up at a time when the prevailing religion of the country was, as it still is, to a great extent, the worship of a plurality of divine beings with material offerings, and when the purer social and spiritual ideas which are the result of a scientific and liberal system of education had not dawned upon the mind of country. No system of ritual which would do justice to these ideas could closely approach the old manuals. The other two books were indeed of great help to the auther, and he has taken from them what he could. Besides its attempted fullness, the chief character of this manual, one which distinguishes it from the two other Brahmo manuals, is the idea of the equal rights of men and which runs throu,h it.

With a profound feeling of its imperfections, the author offers it to the public with the prayer that it may, under divine providence, do the little good it is intended to do.

Sitanath Tattvabhushan

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A Manual of Brahma Rituals & Devotions

A MANUAL OF BRAHMA RITUALS AND DEVOTIONS

A MORNING PRAYER

"O thou Soul of my soul, my loving Father and Mother, I lay asleep on thy bosom without a thought of my soul and body. Thou hast protected me in the helpless hours of sleep, and hast now, in thy inscrutable wisdom and tenderest love, awakened me to enjoy thy infinite bounty and fulfil thy holy will in my life. As in sleep, so in waking, thou art ever near,—nearer to me than any earthly friend. Thou inspirest my thoughts and feelings, bringest forgotten things to my memory and guidest the very prayer I am offering to thee.

Thou revealest thy wonderful word to my senses, making me see its beauty and grandeur, hear its sounds and symphonies and understand its meanings and purposes. Thou are ready to guide me at every step during the new day that opens before me and help me to do my duties and keep myself pure and undefiled amidst the trials and temptations of the day. I lay my hand on thine and beseech thee to be my constant companion and guide in all the hours of the day.

May I feel thy love in all the blessings thou wilt shower on me to-day. May thy holy eyes be on me whenever I am tempted to harbour an unholy thought, speak a cruel world or do a

wicked deed. May thy sweet presence cheer my heart when the labours and worries of the day tire me and may thy living inspiration enlighten and encourage me when I err and feel despondent.

May this day, with all its enjoyments and sufferings, successes and failures draw me nearer to thee than ever, and hasten the day of full and everlasting union with thee."

PUBLIC DIVINE WORSHIP

The service begins with a hymn, which is followed by the minister's call to prayer called *Udbodhanam* (Invocation).

"Fellow-believers and fellow-worshippers of God, the word, 'Udbodhan' literally means awakening. When we approach God to offer the homage of our hearts to him. we have to rouse our devotional feelings, we have to awake, not the object of our worship, but the spirit of worship in us.

Not to speak of the natural man who has not yet learnt to worship, who feels no need of worship, even in us, who habitually worship, spiritual hunger and thirst is often dull and dormant. Finite things often content us and we feel no need to seek the Infinite, to lift up our souls to the Supreme Wisdom, Love and Holiness. Worship offered with a dull heart, without spiritual hunger and thirst, is only a lifeless form, and not real worship. And such worship cannot strengthen the soul.

But the soul is meant for God, and cannot for ever rest satisfied with things earthly. The intellect cannot be satisfied with finite and relative truths, but seeks rest in the truth of all truths, the Absolute. The heart cannot rest contended with finite love—the love of earthly friends, but seeks refuge in the bosom of the Eternal Spirit. The soul cannot be satisfied with the beauty of mere form and colour, but would find the Infinitely Beautiful and be immersed in bliss unspeakable.

When we turn away from earthly objects and enter into the depths of our nature, these higher aspirations of the soul are awakened. And these hankerings of the soul for the Infinite show that the Infinite himself seeks us, that though

he can have no wants, he really wishes that we should think of him, feel his presence, return his love and be united to his holy will.

Once realise this truth, sisters and brethren, that the Infinite, the Perfect One, wants your love and devotion, that he calls you to him through every object of nature and every event of your life, that your whole life. nay even everything that has preceded your coming into life, has been a preparation for this solemn hour, the hour of your conscious and loving communion with him—realise this sublime truth, and you cannot remain indifferent to worship, you cannot fail to make the best of this solemn hour—the seed time of all that is noblest in our nature.

Worship, earnestly and devoutly offered in spirit and in truth, enlightens the intellect, warms the heart, refreshes and strengthens the soul. It helps us, as nothing else can, to attain the full stature of humanity and realise the object of our life. Let us proceed to offer it in a humble and trustful spirit. May he, who has called us to worship him, help us to do so in the proper spirit! May he open the eyes of our spirit to the sublimity and beauty of his nature! May he touch our hearts and call forth from them the devout praise of him that will warm, uplift and sanctify them."

This is followed by another hymn, after which the minister utters aloud, with the proper intonation, the following texts from the *Upanishads*, the congregation joining him in the chanting —

"*Satyam jnanamanantam Brahma*
Anandarupam amritam yat bibhati
Shantam Shivam advaitam
Suddham apapabiddham.

[Brahman is the true, the knowing, the infinite; who manifests himself as blissful and sweet: he is free from all changes and variations; good and without a second; holy and untouched by sin.)

After the chanting of the texts the minister proceeds, in the following manner, to adore God, his adoration *aradhana* dwelling distinctly on each of the principal attributes of God enumerated in the texts, namely...truth, knowledge, infiitude, blissfulness, goodness, unity and holiness.

"Here art thou as the Soul of our souls, the Life of our life, the Fountain of our thoughts, feelings and powers, our truest and inmost Self. It is in thee that we live, move and have our being. Thou art in us and with us always, in our sleep and waking, in our knowledge and ignorance. Ever and anon we forget thee and think we are alone; but thou wakest us with thy living touch and revealest thy presence and activity in us. Thou showest how thou supportest all the powers of our body, mind and soul, and thus humblest our baseless pride and egotism. Thou alone existest in absolute reality, and all thoughts and things are in thee, by thee and through thee. Thou alone, O Supreme Reality, fillest all space and all time and supportest all forms of life and existence. It is with thy power that the sun shines, that fire burns, the air blows and every creature breathes and acts. Where can we fly from thy presence? Thou art in the highest heavens, in the deepest sea and in the inmost parts of our souls.

Thy all-seeing eyes are on us, seeing all that we are, penetrating even the most hidden parts of our nature. And the light of thy eyes shine even in the deepest darkness, the darkness of our sleep, oblivion, ignorance and sin. Thy perfect wisdom

ordaineth and directeth every part and event of our life and correcteth our errors and delusions. It is the light on our path of life and will surely lead us to our goal. Thou art our constant guide and companion. What earthly guide and counsellor can come so near and be so ready with the most perfect counsel as thou? Thy inspiration giveth us understanding, enabling our eyes to see, our ears to hear, our hearts to feel and our souls to realise the truths of thy highest heaven. And thy light shineth as much in the outer as in the inner world. The sun, the moon, fire, lightning and all other lightgiving objects reflect and shine with thy "light". Thou orderest all things in heaven and earth with infinite skill and rulest the universe with perfect laws, leading it to all that is good, beautiful and harmonious, and justifying thy ways to our growing and expanding minds.

Thou infinite and perfect One, as perfect in an atom as in a universe, thou art manifested in this drop of life and consciousness that we call ours and yet thou trancendest all limitations of time and space. Thou art here and yet beyond the remotest fixed star. Thou art now and in the remotest past and future. Time and space cannot contain thee, and man's power of thought and imagination fail to comprehend thee. How wonderful are thy power and glory as manifested in earth and heaven, and yet they are only a speck of thy infinitude. Though small and insignificant, we are supported by thy infinite power, guided by thy infinite wisdom, embraced by thy everlasting arms, and are the inheritors of the infinite treasures of thy perfection and blessedness.

While thus we lose ourselves in thee and feel ourselves encompassed by thy infinitude, we are freed from all trouble and unrest and feel an unspeakable peace—the peace and

blessedness that is eternally in thee and is thy nature. To all those who seek thee and are united to thee, thou impartest this bliss in all its unspeakable sweetness. Thou hast filled the earth with joy and every object and every creature reflect and share thy blissfulness more or less. But the highest joy, joy incomparable to any earthly happiness, thou hast reserved for those who enter into conscious relations with thee. Though often pursuing small objects, O thou perfect One, we feel that we are meant for thee, and that is thou alone who can'st satisfy us. It is only the knowledge of thee that can satisfy our minds, it is only the love of thee that can satisfy our hearts, and it is only thy service that can satisfy our wills. It is only perfect union with thee that can give the most perfect bliss.

While in blissful communion with thee, O thou blessed One, we feel thy infinite love for us. Thou lookest on us with eyes full of the tenderest love and embracest us in thee closest embrace with thy loving arms. What earthly love can be compared to thy love. O thou more than a father, more than a mother, more than any earthly friend? What father and what mother, what husband or wife, what earthly friend can be so near as thou and so constantly watchful, attentive and active? Thou watchest us in our sleep and waking, in our remembrance and oblivion, in our love and indifference, in our obedience and disobedience, and providest for all our wants even before we have felt or thought of them.

Thou art with us and art active in our well-being every moment of our life,—feeding us, clothing us, nursing us, inspiring holy thoughts, feelings and desires in our souls, helping us in our struggles, comforting us in our griefs and disappointments, and constantly leading us on in the paths of eternal progress. It is for us that thou hast made all things and

art supporting all things in heaven and earth. It is for love of us that thou hast spread the vast ocean and the infinite expanse of the blue sky ; that thou makest the sun and the moon to rise and give light, the air to blow and fire to burn ; that thou fillest the fields with corn and the trees with fruits, makest the birds to sing so sweetly and the flowers to charm us by their beauty and sweetness.

Thy love manifests itself in the love of father and mother, husband and wife, brother and sister, of saint, patriot and philanthropist and in all domestic and social relations. Unspeakable is the depth of thy love, O thou perfectly loving One, and countless are its manifestations. Day after day it reveals itself in fresh forms and thus draws our hearts to everlasting and everdeeping union with thee.

Thou art one and indivisible, unifying in these all the infinite diversities of time and space, form and matter, life and activity. When the bewildering multiplicity of the world puzzles and bewilders us, thou revealest thyself through them as the one only Absolute Reality, making all other things real by thy presence and thus bringest back peace to our troubled souls. When the countless attractions of the world divert our hearts, and the conflicting activities of life dissipate our energies, thou revealest thyself as our only Lord and Master, as the only aim und object of our life,—as our final goal, rest and home. The whole world moves round thee, and whether we know it or not, whether we feel it or not, thou art leading us to final union with thee through all the events of the world and all the activities of our life.

Thou holy One, not the slightest taint of unholiness can touch thee. Thy thoughts are all true, thy feelings perfectly pure and loving, thy will ever just and righteous. And thy

holiness manifests itself in us in the form of true and elevated thoughts, pure and loving looks, high and benevolent desires, and firm and steady resolutions. When we are in darkness, thou sheddest light on our path and guidest us. When we are tired and tempted, thou warnest us in solemn tones and inspirest strength in our wavering souls. When we sin and defile ourselves, thou does not forsake us, but washest us with the water of penitence, and redeemest us by thy saving grace. Ever and anon thou givest us glimpse of thy supreme loveliness and drawest our wandering hearts to thee. Thou makest us feel that the loveliness is not for thee alone, but for us also, and that thou wilt make us lovely and worthy children of thee.

Oh, blessed will be the day when our minds, hearts and wills will be perfectly attuned to thee, our long wanderings will be over, and we shall be wholly thine ! And thou givest us a foretaste of that joyous day in this blessed communion of our souls with thee. Accept the humble offering of love and reverence we bring to thee. We consecrate our souls to thee and bow down to thee again and again."

Then follow a few moments of silent communion, *Dhyana*.

This is sometimes followed by the chanting, on the part of the minister, joined by the congregation, of the following verses taken from the *Maha Niran Tantra*, but slightly altered by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore :—

"Om Namaste sate te jagat karanaya,
Namaste chite sarvalokashayaya
Namo advaita tattwaya muktipradaya
Nama Brahmane byapine shashwataya
Tvamekam sharanyam tvamekam varenyam,

Tvamekam jagatpalakam svaprakasham,
Tvamekam jagat kattri patri pahatri
Tvamekam param nischalam nirvlkalpam
Bhayanam bhayam bhishanam bhishananam,
Gatih praninam pabanam pavananam
Mahochchaih padanamniyatri tvamekam,
Paresham param rakshanam rakshhnanam.
Vayantvam shmarama vayantvam bhajamo
Vayantvam jagat sakshirupam namamah.
Sadekam nidhanam niralambam Isham
Bhabambodhipotam sharanyam vrajamah.

Translatian—We bow down to thee, the Cause of the world. We bow down to thee, the conscious, the Support of all worlds. We bow down to thee. one only truth, the giver of liberation. We bow down to thee, all prevading and eternal Brahman. Thou art our only Refuge, thou the only adorable One, thou the only Preserver of the world and the self revealing One. Thou art the only Creator and Sustainer of the world. Thou art above all, immovable and unchangeable. Thou art the fear of the fearful, dreadful to those that are dreadful, the goal of living beings and the sanctifier of those that sanctify. Thou alone art the ordainer of high places, above those that are above all and the protector of those that protect. We remember thee, we adore thee, we bow down to thee, who art the witness of the world. We approach thee, the True, the One, who art our Support but thyself without any support, the Ship for crossing the ocean of the world and our Refuge."

After this the minister utters the following general prayer, the congregation joining him :—

"Lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light from

death to immortality. O Thou Supreme Reality, reveal thyself to us. O merciful One, protect us always with thy infinite mercy."

Sometimes the original prayer in Sanskrit taken partly from the *Upanishads* and partly from the *Rigveda*, of which the above is a free translation, is recited. It is as follows :—

"Asato ma sat gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya
Mrityorma amritam gamaya
Aviravirma edhi
Rudra yatte dakshinam mukham
Tenamam pahi nityam."

This is followed by a hymn, after which, in some churches, the minister offers a prayer for the welfare of the whole world. He then preaches his sermon, prefacing it sometimes by the reading of texts from the scriptures. At the close of the sermon he offers a prayer for divine help in cultivating the particular virtue he has inculcated in the sermon. After the prayer, the following texts are usually uttered by the minister, the congregation joining him.

"Om ekamevadvitiyam.
[God is one only, without a second].
Satyameva jayate
[Truth alone triumphs].
Brahmakripa hi kevalam
[God's mercy alone availeth].
Santih, Santih, Santih, [Peace, Peace, Peace]."

The service then closes with a hymn. But sometimes the

following verses, composed by Pandit Sivanath Sastri, are recited by the minister, the congregation joining him :

"Nama namaste bhagaban
Dinanam sharanam prabho.
Namaste karunasindho
Namaste mokshadayaka.
Pita pata paritrata
Tvamekam sharanam suhrid.
Gatirmukti para sampad
Tvameba jagatam patih.
Papa-graha samakirne
Mohanihara sambrite,
Bhababdhou dustare natha
Noureka bhabatah kripa.
Tat kripa taranim dehi
Dehi natha varabhayam
Mrityu maya maye ghore
Sansare dehi mehmritam.
Kshipram bhabatu shantatma
Bhakta ste bhaktavatsala,
Nirvanam yath papagnih
Tat prasadat pareshwara"

Translation :—We bow down to thee, O Lord, the refuge of the poor. We bow down to thee, the ocean of mercy, the giver of salvation. Thou art our father, supporter, saviour and our only refuge and friend. Thou alone art our goal, salvation, supreme treasure and thou art the Lord of the world. Thy mercy, O Lord, is the only vessel in the ocean of the world, difficult to be crossed, full of crocodiles of sin and covered with the mist of delusion. Give us the vessel of thy

mercy ; give us, O Lord, the boon of fearlessness. In this fearful world, full of death and illusion, give us immortality. Thou lover of those who love thee, may thy devotee soon attain a peaceful heart, and may the fire of sin be extinguished by thy grace, O Supreme Lord.

FAMILY WORSHIP

In the daily or weekly worship of a family, the from of public worshlp given above may be used, or the following shorter service, preceded and followed by a hymn :

"O thou living God of our family, thou art in us our Life and Soul, and thou art in every part of this house and of the world. Thou seest our inmost hearts and watchest every thought, feeling and desire in our minds and every word that we do. Thou infinite One, though we are small and insignificant, thy boundless power and wisdom protect us every moment of our life. Thou art in every bit of happiness we enjoy in this home, in the smiling faces of the members of this household, in the sweet food and drink that we partake of, and in the sweet music that gladdens us. It is thy love, O thou infinitely loving One, that binds every heart to every other in this family. It is thy infinite and unspeakable love that exisists in various forms in the heart of the father and the mother, the husband and and the sister, the son and the daughter and inspires all other relationships. It is thy love that gives us our food and drink, imparts to us knowledge and goodness and enables us to do our duties. Holy one, it is thou that warnest us when we are tempted, correctest us when we go wrong, and leadest us on and on in the path of righteousness. Thou alone art our Lord and Master, our Guide and Teacher and the aim and goal of our life. We bow down to thee in love and reverence."

After a few moments of silent communion, a prayer, like the following is offered :

"Our loving Father, help us to remember thee always, as the God of our family, as the bond of our union, as our Protector

and Guide, and as our Master whose holy will we are to do in all our actions. Fill our hearts with love and enable us to give to every one the love, reverence and tenderness that are due to him or her. May we love and honour our parents in heart, word and deed, treat our brothers and sisters with uniform kindness and tenderness, and be affectionate and considerate to our servants. May husband and wife be ever true to their holy union and may parents set an example of kind and holy behaviour to their children. Enable us all to bear patiently with the defects and shortcomings of one another, to serve one another, and help one another in difficulties and keep us free from anger and selfishness. Give us strength to do our allotted duties faithfully and enable us to realise, by living sweet and holy lives. the ideal of happy and blessed home.

PRAYER AT BATH

"O loving and holy Father, this cool and pure water, made to refresh and purify my body, is a special manifestation of thy love and care. It is a type of thy saving grace, the grace that purifies and strengthens the soul. I bow down to thee with reverence and gratitude for this most valued gift of thine. As this water daily purifies and refreshes my body, so may my soul be hallowed and strengthened by constant communion with thee."

GRACE AT MEALS

"O loving Mother, Giver of food and sustainer of my body, thou art present here with this food and drink in thy hands, ready to feed me and give me health and strength. Thy love and care are in every particle of the materials before me and in every arrangement made for their preparation and digestion. I bow down to thee with heartfelt gratitude for this manifestation of thy maternal love. May I always remember thy love with thankfulness, and use in thy service the health and strength gained through the food and drink thou givest me. As this meal sustains me, so may thy grace ever keep my soul in health and strength."

PRAYER BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF DAILY BUSINESS

"Thou, my only Lord and Master, art within and without me. It is thou who, through my earthly master, demandest loving and faithfull service from me. May I ever feel thy presence in the work I am going to begin ! May thy all-seeing eyes enlighten me and thy constant inspiration strengthen me. When my energy and patience flag, may thy touch refresh and encourage me. When I feel tempted to neglect my work or do carelessly, may I meet thy eyes and be warned and steadied. Enable me to treat with kindness and honour all with whom I may come into contact in the course of my work. Cure me of all selfish and ambitious desires, of the love of human applause, and enable me to seek only thy glory in all that I do. May work, instead of estranging my soul from thee, draw me ever nearer and nearer to thee and help my everlasting union with thee !"

AN EVENING PRAYER

"Thou Soul of my soul, my constant Companion and Friend, thou hast put out the dazzling light of the day and drawn the shades of the evening around me. Thou hast hushed the voices of the day and art bringing nature to solemn quietness. Thus thou art drawing my soul to communion with thee. Though doing thy work during the day, how often I forget thee ! Though thou didst sustain my body and soul every moment and guide me at every step, how little did I feel it ! But thou needest not my recognsition and my love. Like an unconscious or faintly conscious infant carried on its mother's arms, thou hast nursed me, led me on my path of progress, mostly without my knowledge and effort. And what I call my knowledge and power are also thine, thou All-in-All. I now see thy loving care in all I have seen and heard, all I have enjoyed and suffered, in all I have learnt and all I have been enabled to do. Innumerable are thy blessings and this drop of gratitude that I feel for them is but a poor return for thy infinite and inexhaustible love. May my soul grow day after day in knowledge and love of thee and in power to do thy will. How often, O thou holy One, my Saviour, have I failed to-day to be faithful to the light thou hast revealed to me ! How many evil thoughts and desires have I harboured in my mind ! How many words have I uttered that I should not have uttered ! How many things have I failed to do that I should have done ! How many things did I do that I ought not to have done ! All these make me sad and obstruct my communion with thee. O God ! reveal thyself to me more clearly and infuse more of thy holy strength into my soul. May thy beauty and sweetness so fill my heart that desire for earthly enjoyments

may cease for ever. May thy will be so dear to me that no duty may be left undone, and nothing that is not pleasing to thee may tempt me. May every day draw me closer and closer to thee till life becomes a joyful communion with thee and a loving obedience to thy holy will ! "

PRAYER BEFORE GOING TO BED

O my loving Mother, after the labours of the day thou hast given me rest and invitest me to resign all my thoughts and anxieties and fall asleep on thy enternal bosom. I feel thy love and my entire dependence on thee. Through sleep and waking, rest and labour, thou dost fulfil thy holy will in my life and lead me on to my goal. After the blessed sleep thou dost mercifully grant me, may I wake to a consciousness of thy presence within and without thee.

JATAKARMA

The Birth Ceremony

The birth ceremony of a new born child is, as a rule, celebrated within a month of its birth. At the hour fixed for the ceremony, when the guests have assembled in the place of worship, the mother or the father of the child brings it there, neatly dressed, and address the guests thus :—

"Dear ststers and brethren, I beg to present to you this child whom our Divine Father has sent to be nursed and educated as a member of your community. I humbly invite you to bless him (or her) and to join me in thanking God for this gift of his and praying for his (or her) welfare.

After a hymn, the minister conducts the usual Invocation and Adoration, making special reference to the child. Then, after the general prayer (*Asato ma sat gamaya* etc.) and a hymn, the father or the mother offers the following prayer (taken from the *New Samhita* or one in its spirit) :

"Merciful God, I thank thee for having with tender care protected this child in the mother's womb, and preserved it, in its helpless and defenceless condition, from all manner of danger and disease. I thank thee that, in darkness and solitude, thou didst shape its limbs with artistic symmetry and beauty and having furnished it with all necessary appliances, thou hast, in the fullness of time, brought it into the world to do thy work and serve thy people. And as I thankfully bow before thee for this thy gift, which is unto me a fresh token of thy love a treasure and a joy, grant that I may fully realise my responsibility and discharge my stewardship with fidelity. Conscious of

my weakness and imperfections, I cast myself under thy guidance and most humbly do I beseech thee to give me faith, strength, and true paternal love, that I may, as thy devoted servant, keep this infant under thy guardianship and care, and rear it for thy service. Bless this Child and be unto it Father, Mother and Friend, that it may ever repose on thy tender lap far from all evil. God of this house, make the newborn child a real joy in all things unto its parents and a blessing to the whole family. For all thy mercies, good God, we ascribe unto the glory everlasting."

The minister adds his benediction in words like the following :

"Help us all, O Lord, to feel our responsibility for this newcomer in our community. May the atmosphere around this child be holy ! Make our thoughts, words and deeds favourable to its healhy growth !"

The ceremony closes with the utterance of the usual texts (*Om Ekamevadvitiyam* etc.) and a hymn.

A *Janma Patrika* (birth-record) somewhat in the following form is then written or a printed form filled in, in the presence of the guests, some of them signing it as witness. The space for the name of the child is left unfilled till the Namakaran or naming ceremony. The suggested name may be put down in the *Jataptara* even before the name-giving ceremony.

JANMAPATRIKA

HOROSCOPE OR BIRTH RECORD

Brahma kripahi Kevalam

Ekamevadvityam Satyamevajayate

(name) ... ... son (or daughter) of ... ... was born at ... ... (hour) on ... ... day, the ... . date ... ... (month) .. .. of the Christian era. ... ... at ... ... (place) in the district of .. ..

Genealogy

Father's side

Father ... .

Grandfather ... ...

Grandmother ... ...

Great-grandfather ... ...

Great-grandmother ... ...

Mother's stde

Mother ... ...

Grandfather ... ...

Grandmother ... ...

Great-grandfather ... ...

Great-grandmother ... ...

Witnesses of this Record

1. Name ... ...
   Address ... ...
   Date ... ...

2. Name ... ...
   Address ... ...
   Date ... ...

Some donations should be made to the Brahmo Samaj or for any charitable purposes.

—o—

NAMAKARAN AND ANNAPRASAN

Naming, Rice-giving or Bread-giving Ceremony

This ceremony usually takes place towards the close of the first year of the child's birth. When the guests have assembled in the place of worship, the father or mother or any near relative of the child brings it neatly dressed and presents it to them with words like the following :—

"Dear sisters and brethren, it is necessary that this child, born in your community, should be known to you by a distinct name and that solid food should be given to it. I humbly invite you to give it a name, bless it and pray for its healthy growth in body and soul.

After a hymn, the minister conducts the usual invocation and adoration with special reference to the occasion. After the general prayer and a hymn, the father or mother of the child prays in the following manner or spirit :—

"Our Divine Father and Mother, thou hast, in thy unspeakable love and kindness, nursed and preserved this child and enabled us to see this day of its naming and breadgiving. Thou art its life and strength, its breath and nourishment. We are only humble instruments in thy hands. Thou hast constantly watched it in its sleep and waking, its hunger and thirst, its health and illness. How wonderfully hast thou nourished every limb of body and every power of its soul ! For all thy love and care we bow down to thee in heartfelt gratitude and reverence, For giving us a particle of thy loving care, for enabling us so far to serve the child in the midst of countless difficulties, we bow down to thee again and again.

We feel, O Lord, how weak we are, how unworthy to take

care of this heavenly gift of thine. Now that thou art leading it to higher growth, enabling it to think, feel and act, and take its place in thy kingdom, we feel our unworthiness the more deeply.

Give us more wisdom, that we may avoid ruinous errors in training it. Give us more patience and endurance, and more of thy divine watchfulness, that we may take better care of thy child and overcome the innumerable difficulties, inward and outward, that beset our path. Make our thoughts holy, our feelings warm, our words kind truthful, and our deeds righteous, that we may not sully thy heavenly flower with our unholy touch, but many always keep it holy and make it more and more fit for thy service. Enable us to feel constantly that the service of this child is thy own service and a means of our salvation and everlasting union with thee."

The minister then takes the child in his arms or places it before him and says.

"In the holy presence of God and in this assembly of his worshippers, I give unto this son (or daughter) of Srijut... ... ... and Srimati ... ... the name of Sriman (or Srimati) ... ... May the growth and training of this child be so that this name will be a dear and sweet one to the child's parents, friends and neighbours !

O our loving Father and Mother, with the growth of this child, with its daily increasing power of understanding, feeling and action, thou art adding to our joy and multiplying our responsibilities. Enable us to feel and remember how our thoughts, words and deeds, specially our direct dealings with it, may affect the growth of its body and soul both for good and for evil. Enable us so to shape our lives and characters,

that with its daily growth this child may know and feel that it is born into a heavenly family, a body of thy loving children and faithful servants. With the daily increase of bodily strength, may it grow in wisdom, love and righteousness of its relation to thee !"

The service closes with a suitable hymn.

At the conclusion of the service the child is taken to the dining room and placed on a seat specially intended for it. Then in the presence of friends and relatives the minister or a near relative puts some rice or bread into its month with a prayer like the following :—

Bless this food, O Lord. May it help the growth of the child's soul as well as its body."

The above relative may be followed by other relatives and friends in feeding the child. Some donations are to be made to the Brahmo Samaj or for some charitable purposes.

VIDYARAMBHA

Beginning of General Education

This ceremony takes place usually about the end of the child's fourth year. When guests have assembled in the place of worship, the father or mother of the child brings him (or her) there, neatly dressed, and tells him (or her) to bow down to the minister and to the assembly, After he (or she) has done so, the father or mother thus addresses the minister and the assembly :

"Revered Sir, and dear sisters, and brethren, by the blessing of God, this child of mine has now come to an age when he (or she) should be initiated into the art of reading and writing and placed under regular instruction. I ask you humbly, Sir, to inaugurate this teaching, and you all, my sisters, and brethren, to bless the child and help him (or her) in the career of student-ship he (or she) is beginning to-day."

With these words the father or mother places a primer, a slate and a pencil into the hands of the minister, who accepts them for presentation to the child, who takes his (or her) seat in front of the minister, After a hymn, the usual invocation and adoration are conducted by the minister. After the general prayer and a hymn, the minister addresses the child in the following manner :—

"My dear child, up to this you have been taught only through oral instruction. To-day we shall begin teaching you to read and write. When you learn to read, you will learn many pleasant and useful things from books, and when you learn to write you will be happy and able to do good to many people. If you learn diligently, God and all your earthly friends will be

pleased with you. God willing, you will, by and by, become one of those learned persons when you see around you. You will then be loved and honoured by all. Do then resolve to be very attentive to your teachers and diligent in learning your daily lessons. Respeet your teachers as you do your parents, and when you go to school, treat your fellow students as brothers (or sisters). Bow down to God every day before you begin your lesson and pray to him to make you diligent. When your lesson is over, bow down to him again."

The minister then presents the child with the primer, the slate and the pencil, and having opened the book, shows him (or her) the letters of the alphabet and tells their names, the child repeating the names after him. He also teaches the child to trace the letters on the slate. The child then bows down to God and to the minister, who says, "The Lord bless you to acquire knowledge."

The child's father or mother then prays in the following manner :—

"I bow down to thee, O thou loving Father and Teacher, that thou hast enab'ed me to see this day. Day by day and moment by moment, thou art bringing out the powers of this immortal soul, which thou hast, in thy inscrutable wisdom and unspeakable love, placed under my unworthy charge. With the increase of our joy at seeing the growth of this child, thou art multiplying my responsibltities and laying on me a harder and harder task. Give me strength to do my task faithfully. May I not forget that I am myself a learner, a student of thy school, the universe, and have to learn daily as well as to teach. Inspire me with a deep and sincere love of knowledge and enable me to impart it to my child. Make me humble, reverent and obedient, and enable me to instil these virtues into my child's

soul. Keep him (or her) from the evils of bad company and help him (or her) to grow in knowledge and holiness."

The minister then closes with a benediction and prayer in the following spirit :—

"Accept our prayers, O Lord, and make our community and the other surroundings of this child favourable to his (or her) growth in knowledge and holiness. Enable us to set good examples before him (or her) by our conduct and help him (or her) to become a useful and valued member of society and a worthy child and servant of thine."

The service closes with a hymn, at the conclusion of which the child bows down with reverence to the guests and receives their blessings.

Some donations are to be made to the Brahmo Samaj or for some charitable purposes.

DIKSHA

Initiation into Brahmaism

This ceremony takes place usually when the candidate has completed the age of eighteen years and has been under religious training for at least one year. It is held usually in a place of public worship, but sometimes also in private dwelling places in the presence of a number of fellow believers. When the minister has conducted the usual invocation and adoration, the lady or gentleman under whose instruction th candidate has been trained, or some other elder brother or sister in God who has watched the progress of the candidate's religious life, introduces him (or her) to the minister with words like the following :—

"Revered Sir, I have great pleasure in presenting Srimat or Srimati ... ... for initation into Brahmaism. I believe that he (or she) understands and is convinced of the truth of the fundamental principles of our faith, and I know what he (or she) has been endeavouring to follow these principles for the last ... ... I beg to commend him (or her) to you and ask you to admit him (or her) into our brotherhood.

The minister then asks the candidate :—

"Srimat or Srimati ... ...

Have you made up your mind to declare your faith in and be initiated into the Brahma religion, in the presence of the All-Merciful God and your fellow-believers ?

Candidate—Yes, O reverved minister. I have made up my mind to declare my faith in and be initiated into the Brahma religion in the presence of the All-Merciful God and of my fellow-believers.

M.—Do you know and believe in the fundamental principles of Brahmoism ?

C.—Yes, I do know and believe in the fundamental principles of Brahmoism.

M,—Who is the object of your worship ?

C.—I believe in and worship only one God,—the True, the Good and the Beautiful ; he is spirit , he is infinite in power, wisdom, love, justice and holiness. He is omnipresent, eternal and blissful. No image, no created object or animal, is to be worshipped as God or an incarnation of God or as a mediator between God and men,

M.—How do you worship him ?

C.—God is spirit and he is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. His worship is immediate and spiritual. To love God whole-heartedly and to do his will inspired by the love of God, constitutes true worship. No offerings or sacrifices are necessary for divine worship.

M.—What is your idea of the human soul ?

C.—The human soul is immortal and capable of infinite progress and is responsible to God for its doings.

M.—What is your idea of Shastras of Scriptures ?

C.—The voice of God in the heart of man is the true scripture. No book, no saying of any person, is to be regarded as infallible and as the sole means of salvation, but truth is to be reverently accepted from all scriptures. Besides, we are also to study reverently the vast book of nature as well as books on Science, Philosophy, literature and History and gather knowledge from them for our spiritual welfare.

M.—What do you regard as your *guru* or religious preceptor ?

C.—God is my only *Guru* or unfailing guide who speaks in

the heart. All saints and sages of all ages and climes, men who have ever tired in any way to further the progress of man, are my teachers. But no man is to be regarded as an infallible guide.

M.—What is your relation with your fellow beings ?

C.—God is our Father and all men and women are brothers and sisters.

M.—What is your idea of Heaven and Hell ?

C.—I do not believe that there are disinct religions as Heaven and Hell. These indicate spiritual conditions of individual souls. When God reveals himself in our soul and divine bliss is realised, I call this state Heaven ; when the heart is vitiated with evil thoughts, I call this state Hell. God rewards virtue and punishes sin. His punishments are remedial and not eternal.

M.—What is your idea of atonement ?

C.—Cessation from sin accompanied by sincere repentance is the only atonement for it. Atonement consists in change of heart and not in the performance of eternal observances.

M.—What is salvation ?

C.—Salvation consists on the one hand in freedom from sin in words, thoughts and deeds ; and on the other hand, in union with God in wisdom, love, and holiness. Man will ever approach God in wisdom, love and holiness, but will never merge his self in the Universal Soul.

M.—Have you heard the call of God for accepting the Brahmo religion ?

C.—Yes, revered Sir, I have heard in the inmost recesses of my heart the voice of God calling upon me to accept the Brahmo religion.

M.—Then avow thy faith in the principles of Brahmoism.

C.—(1) I believe in God as the one only Creator and Sustainer of the world. I believe him to be infinite in power, wisdom, love and holiness. (2) I believe the human soul to be immortal and eternally progressive. (3) I believe that God manifests himself directly to the soul of man and that there are no meditators between God and the soul in the shape of prophets or scriptures. (4) I honour and accept all religious teachers and books so far as they are in harmony with direct revelation of God in the soul. (5) I resolve to worship God daily and to practise holiness with all my heart and soul. (6) I abjure caste and idolatry, and resolve to perform all domestic ceremonies according to the principles of the Brahmo Samaj. May God help me in being faithful to the vow I take to-day.

The candidate then offers a short prayer.

The minister then charges the initiate thus :

"Sriman or Srimati this is a most happy day to you and to us all. You have to-day declared your faith in Brahmoism, the highest and the most valued truth to us, and entered the Brahmo Samaj, the visible embodiment of that truth. We, your fellow-believers, and fellow-worshippers, shall watch your career as a Brahma (or Brahmika) with great interest. Endeavour with all your might to keep the solemn vow you have taken to-day, and to realise in your life the lofty ideal which your faith sets before you. Take all possible care to preserve its purity, its spirituality and its liberality. Theism is not a new doctrine in India. Many of our ancient and medieval sages and saints held it in all its loftiness. But they could not keep it free from the popular ceremonialism and idolatry of the country. And though the early teachers of one faith clearly conceived the idea of God's direct revelation to the soul, the doctrine of the blind acceptance of external revelation laterly

came to mar the purity of that conception. The Brahmo Samaj movement inaugurated by Raja Ram Mohan Ray and fostered and developed by our later leaders, is a serious attempt to preserve the purity of Theism, to save it from the dangers to which it has hitherto been liable, and to make it suited to the changed state of the country and the world. While you should entertain deep reverence for the ancient teachers and scriptures of this country and of the world in general, I charge you solemnly never to lose sight of the reforming character of Brahmoism and the Brahmo Samaj. The history of the Brahmo Samaj may be said to be one long struggle to keep up the purity, spirituality and liberality of its faith and in your life as a Brahmo (or Brahmika) you should keep up that struggle in all its earnestness. Never be tempted to make slightest compromise with caste and idolatry and thereby bring upon our religion the torpor, the practical death, from which the Brahmo movement has saved it. On the other hand, in your praise-worthy zeal for social reform, which indeed is an integral part of the programme of the Brahmo Samaj, never forget that reform is only the outer expression of Brahmoism and that its life and essence is spirituality,—conscious communion with the Supreme Spirit. Worship God every day with reverence, have communion with him, consecrete your life to him and do his will. Seek his guidance in every concern of your life. In your reverence for the teachers and sacred books of your own and other churches, be ever careful that they do not take the place of the direct revelation of truth in your soul by the inspiration of the Divine Spirit. And, however devoted you may be to your own church or the particular section of the church to which you happen to belong, always guard your soul against bigotry and narrowness, and remember that there are wise

and holy men in all churches and sects, and that sincere love and honour are due to them. Lastly, keep yourself free from selfishness by all means,—selfishness which attacks even the highest spiritual life. While endeavouring to be a faithful and devoted Brahmo in your private life. take always a living and practical interest in the propagation of your faith and in the progress of the Brahmo Samaj. Serve Brahmoism and the Brahmo Samaj in all possible ways with your money, your tongue and your hands. May God be ever with you and help you in your endeavour to live a truly Brahmo life."

The ceremony concludes with the minister's prayer and a hymn after which the initiate bows down to the minister and other elders and receives their blessings.

VIVAHA

Marriage

As Brahmo marriages are usually registered under Special Marriage Act, which will be found in the Appendix, a notice of the mrrriage in the form laid down by the Act, and signed by both the parties, is sent to the Marriage Register at least 30 days before the day fixed for the celebration of the marriage. On the day the notice is signed, or on a previous date, a *Vagdan* or Engagement ceremony takes place in some cases. It is intended to inaugurate a period of preparation for taking the solemn vow of matrimony. It is usually a short ceremony consisting of a prayer like the following preceded and followed by a hymn :

"O God of love, Thou Searcher and Inner Ruler of our hearts, thou hast drawn together the hearts of these thy children and thou seest the intentions they have formed. Impress upon them the solemnity of the vow they are going to take. Help them in searching their hearts, in cherishing pure desires and motives, in feeling the responsibilities of the life they are going to enter, and in laying down plans for the conduct of that life. Enable them to feel the difficulties before them and humbly to trust in thee for counsel and guidance. Save them all kinds of fickleness, and enable them to proceed with calmness and firm determination in the path they have chosen. Reveal thyself as the aim and object of their lives and help them to take every serious step in life in the light of this truth."

In the morning of the day fixed for the marriage, divine service takes place separately in the houses of the bride and the bridegroom for preparing their minds for the actual ceremony.

In the course of this service, the ancestors of the parties are remembered and their blessings on the marriage asked for.

Before the commencement of the actual ceremony the preliminary portion of the registration is gone through in the presence of the Registrar, three witnesses, and the guardians of the bride and the bridegroom. This usually takes place in a room or spot other than that fixed for the actual ceremony.

In the place fixed for the ceremony, the bride and the bridegroom sit facing each other in front of minister's *vedi*. The guardians of the parties, the Registrar and the witnesses occupy seats near them. After a hymn the bride's guardian stands up and says to the assembled guests :

"Sriman ... ... having expressed a desire to marry my ... ... Srimati ... ... I, knowing her consent to the marriage, present her to you all and most respectfully ask you to help in the performance of the ceremony and say *"Svasti"* (all right)."

The guests say *"Svasti."*

The bridgroom's guardian then stands up and says :

"Srimati ... ... having expressed a desire to marry my ... ... Sriman ... ... , I knowing his consent to the marriage, present him to you all and ask you most respectfully to help in the performance of the ceremony and say *"Svasti."*

The guests say *"Svasti,"*

Then the minister says to the bridegroom ;

"Sriman ... . , in the presence of the all-seeing and all-holy God and of these fellow-believers, of yours, have you made up your mind to accept Srimati ... ... as your lawful wife, and take upon you the duties and responsibilities of a faithful husband ?"

The bridegroom says. "I have so made up my mind."

The minister to the bride.

"Srimati ... ... , in the presence of the all-seeing and all-holy God, and these fellow-believers of yours, have you made up your mind to accept Sriman ... ... as your lawful husband, and take upon you the duties and responsibilities of a faithful wife ?"

The bride : "I have so made up my mind."

After a second hymn the minister conducts the usual invocation and adoration with special reference to the ceremony, or he substitutes a short service like the following :

"O thou all-pervading and all seeing Being, thou art present within and without us as the witness and presiding deity of this solemn ceremony. It is thou who hast drawn together the hearts of these two children of thine and manifested a particle of thy infinite love as the bond of the union thou art going to effect. We give our hearts' deepest gratitude to thee for having removed all obstacles to this holy union and enabled us to being these two souls at thy feet. It is thy love and the light of thy holiness that have guided them so far and will ever guide them through the trials and difficulties of the life that lies before them. It is thou that art the object and goal of our life and it is as a help to union with thee that thou art bringing about this union of souls. We consecrate ourselves to thee and seek thy blessing and inspiration in tying this holy knot."

The minister then joins the right hands of the parties and twines a garland of flowers round them.

The bridegroom then says :

"This day, the ... ... day of the month of ... ... , in the year ... ... , the ... ... day after the full (or new) moon, the ... ... day of the week, I, in the

presence of the all-seeing and all-holy God and of the friends and fellow-believers assembled here, of my own free will and witha heart free from hesitation, and knowing your consent to this union, take you as my lawful wife. In prosperity and adversity, in happiness and misery, in health and sickness, I will assiduously promote your welfare as long as I live. In virtue, riches, and pleasure I shall ever endeavour to make you my companion. May my heart be yours, may your heart be mine, and may our hearts thus united be the Lord's ! May you be my friend, may I be your friend, and may our friendship never be dissolved !

The bride then says :

"This day, the ... ... day of the month of ... ..., in the year, ...the day ... ... after the full (or new) moon, the ... ... day, of the week, I, in the presence of the all-seeing and all holy God and of the friends and fellow-believers assembled here, of my own free will and with a heart free from hesitation, and knowing your consent to this union, take you as my lawful husband. In prosperity and adversity, in happiness and misery, in health and sickness, I will assiduously promote your welfare as long as I live. In virtue, riches and pleasure I shall ever endeavour to make you my companion. May my heart be yours, may your heart be mine, and may our hearts thus united be the Lord's ! May you be my friend, may I be your friend, and may our friendship never be dissolved !"

The bride and bridegroom then pray together :

"Help us, O Lord, in keeping this holy marriage convenant.".

Then the bridegroom and the bride exchange their garlands and rings.

The minister then addresses the married couple in the following manner :

"Sriman ... ... and Srimati ... ...

The solemn vow you have just taken indicates briefly the duties you are to do as husband and wife,—the direction in which you are to proceed in making your married life a success. Never regard your vow as a mere form gone through once for all, but remember it day after day, and endeavour to be true to it. Marriage in its reality and fullness is not an event that takes place on a particular hour. It is an ideal that has to be realised by a life long endeavour. It is an ideal friendship—the closest and deepest friendship conceivable. At the beginning of the married life it is often very partially realized, and even in advanced life the realization is still imperfect except in rare cases. But the imperfect realization does not make the ideal less truly an ideal. By personal and social efforts, continued through years and generations, we must endeavour to realize the true ideal."

"An essential condition of the realization of the ideal marriage is mutual respect between the parties. Respect must lead to marriage and respect must be the guiding principle of the married life. Want of respect mars the ideal of marriag and obstructs its actual realization. If, in marriage, the husband thinks that he is superior to his wife, and she is inferior to him, that he is independent and the wife is dependent on him, and that he is the end while his wife is only a means, the marriage relation is ill-conceived, and this wrong conception must lead to numerous evils."

"The fact is that the parties have perfectly equal rights, and if one party has intellectual or spiritual excellences which are wanting in the other, he or she must resolve to share them

with the other as if they were their common property ; that if the wife is dependent upon the husband in certain matters, so is the husband on the wife in others ; and that they are both mutually ends and means, both helping each other to attain a common end. Proceed with this true ideal of marriage, respect each other in heart, word and deed, and you will be rewarded with success at every step."

"But you must be prepared for many a failure too,—failures which must be taken as only partial and means to the final success I hope you will both be blessed with a good deal of enjoyment in your married life ; but you must always remember that 'Neither enjoyment nor sorrow is our destined end or way,' as the poet truly says. Enjoyment and sorrow are both only means to the end,—the perfection of the soul. When troubles come, troubles which may seem to obstruct your realization of the marriage ideal, do not think your marriage a failure. They are as much messengers of God,—disguised messengers,—as pleasures. In overcoming them, even in attempting to overcome them, we achieve success and go forward on our path. Keep your mind always open to good advice from pious and experienced men."

"Make your home an altar of God and an institution of Brahmo Samaj. You will now be judged by a standard higher and broader than that by which you have hitherto been judged. You will now be judged no merely as individuals, but as husband and wife, and as householders. You will be expected to be always ready to welcome friends and guests, help the poor and suffering, and serve the Brahmo Samaj, the country and every good cause with your united hearts and

hands. We all wish you success in the new career which opens before you, and shall watch your endeavours and help them with all our might."

The minister then prays as follows :

"Reveal thyself, O Lord, to these thy children. Reveal to them the true ideal of a husband and a wife, and help them to realize it in thought, feeling, word and deed. Reveal thyself to them as the goal and object of their lives and make their married life, with all its duties, trials, joys and sorrows, means to the attainment of that goal. May this marriage be a blessing to the parties, to the Brahmo Samaj, to the country and to the world ! May the home thou hast built today be an altar of thine and help to all good causes. Give strength to us all to help in making the union we have brought about through thy grace all that we desire. May thy will be done and thy kingdom established in this united life and in all families on earth, as it is in heaven,"

The ceremony closes with a hymn, after which the married couple bow down to the minister and other elders and receive their blessings.

The latter part of the registration is then done in the presence of the three witnesses.

Some donations are to be made to the Brahmo Samaj.

BADHU-VARAN

Welcoming a Newly Married Bride

The bridegroom's house is usually decorated with evergreens, festoons and flags to welcome a newly married bride when she comes to it from her paternal home for the first time after marriage. When she arrives, she is at first introduced to the members of the family, and then to the assembled guests. She bows down to the elders and receives their blessings. The youngsters bow down to her or salute her and receive her blessings or greetings. A short service, in the usual form, then takes place, in the course of which the minister addressess the bride thus :

"Srimati ... ..., we heartily welcome you to this your new home. Every member of this family will try his or her utmost to make you happy and comforatble, and every friend of the family will help you with his or her kind advice and active service. Try, with prayers, good resolutions and the assistance of your husband, to feel at home here, to adapt yourself to the modes of life prevailing in this house and to make every one of its inmates your own. Perhaps you will often find the task difficult ; but it must be done, for it is the Will of God."

"It is divinely ordained that woman, as a rule, must leave the family in which she is born, come to live with those who were formerly aliens to her and make them her own people. Your father and mother, brothers and sisters, and other relatives by blood are still and will ever remain what they are, dear and near to you. But it is required, by the new relation you have entered into, that you will look upon the parents of your husband as

your own parents, his brothers and sisters as your brothers and sisters, his other relatives and friends as your own relatives and friends."

"The task is indeed a difficult one, but love and earnest endeavour can and do achieve this wonderful feat. If you are prayerful, thoughtful and earnest, you will see how, in a short time, your new home, relatives and friends have become as dear to you as the old."

"And, it is also divinely ordained, you will be blessed by this transformation in your life. Your heart will be broadened, your intellect sharpened and your capacity for active service indefinitely increased. The married life, the home that is *made* by one's moral efforts as distinguished from the one that is merely born into,—is a great training ground, a much greater one than the latter ; and blessed is the woman who receives willingly and with thanks the full benefit of this training."

"Do not look upon this life as one of mere pleasure, as the shallow and sensuous do. No doubt you will enjoy many pleasures here, such pleasures as unmarried life can never afford. But be prepared for many a trouble also. Both pleasure and pain are ordained by God to lead us to something higher,—the perfection of our souls through union with him."

"In your life as a married woman, your patience and energies will often be sorely tried. You will see sights, hear words, and receive treatment which will be very painful to you and from which you will wish to fly. But you must remember that they are a part of your allotted destiny, and that you must put up with them with patience. Your conduct will often draw criticism which will appear to you unjust and unsympathetic. It may be so, but it is often unavoidable and must be patiently borne. Gradually it will die out. It makes time for people to be just and loving to a new-comer."

"You will often have to do tasks which will tax your energy and perseverance day after day, month after month. and perhaps year after year,—such tasks perhaps as you were never required to do in your old home. They must be prayerfully and faithfully done, and their doing will bless your soul and perfect your life. In this country the joint family system makes the life of a housewife far more strenous than where this system does not prevail. The system has both its advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps it is not suited to the times and seems to be gradually passing away. But so long as it exists among us we must patiently put up with the unavoidable troubles arising from it and endeavour to reap its benefits. For a newly married bride it is a distinct advantage to be guided by the superior experience of a mother-in-law, an elder-sister-in-law and other elderly relatives, and for all housewives it is a blessings to love and serve and be loved and helped by a large number of relatives. However, the Spirit of God, if you only seek its help, will teach you your duties at every step of the new life you have entered upon."

"Make prayer, both private prayes and united family prayer, the basis, the binding thread, of your home life. Union with the Supreme Heart will make the union of human hearts easy. Let the spirit of prayer pervade everything that is done here—the meals that are taken, the pleasures that are enjoyed, the trials that are borne, the lessons that are learnt, and the labours that are gone through. Let friends and guests always find a hearty welcome here. Let the poor and the distressed find here willing ears and helping hands. Let the Brahmo Samaj feel that in this

new home one more useful institution is added to it, and let every good cause pertaining to the country or humanity in general, draw its hearty sympathy and active co-operation."

The ceremony closes with the minister's prayer and a hymn.

Some donations are to be made to the Brahmo Samaj.

ANTYESHTI

Funeral Ceremony

When the dead body has been cleansed and dressed in neat clothing, it is placed on a bier and covered with a new sheet. Scented water is also sprinkled and flowers scattered over it. A relative or friend of the deceased or a minister then offers a short prayer in the following spirit :

"O thou Soul of our souls, thou abode of immortal spirits, in thy inscrutable wisdom thou hast taken away this dear one from us. The mortal body is reduced to cold clay, but the immortal soul lives in thee now as ever. It is in thy loving arms in the world beyond as it was here on earth. Do thou lead it to higher and higher worlds to deeper and deeper communion with thee. There is deep sorrow in and around us. Reveal thy loving face to these stricken souls, touch them with thy loving hands and give them peace and consolation is thee. May thy will be done, in life and death, in union and bereavement, in joy and sorrow !"

The body is then carried to the crematory or cemetry, the mourners and friends accompanying it and chanting texts like *Brahmo Kripa hi Kevalam* and *Jay Jay Sachchidananda Hare*, all along the way and, if possible, singing suitable hymns.

When the dead body is placed on the pyre, or the coffin with the body is ready for being lowered into the grave, a relative, friend or minister prays :

"O Lord, in thy name we consign the mortal to ashes (or dust), but the immortal lives in thee. Prosper the departed soul

in its voyage heavenward and let his or her blessed memory live amongst us and join our souls to the next world."

In case of cremations, the ashes are sometimes collected in an urn and afterwards deposited in a suitable place and a memorial erccted over them.

The period of mourning extends from one week to one month according either to the varying depth of feeling or deference to family traditions. The form also varies according to different tastes and local customs. Family prayer, with special reference to the departed soul, is usually offered daily until the day fixed for the *Sraddha* ceremony.

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SRADDHA

Requiem Ceremony

The *Sraddha* ceremony usually begins with *Sankirtans* sung in chorus early in the morning. The first part of the usual service,—up to the general prayer, is then conducted by the minister. This is usually followed by the reading of texts from the scriptures with expositions, by the same minister or another specially entrusted with the task. The scriptures selected are ordinarily the *Katha* Upanishad, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Santiparva* of the *Mahabharatam*. The following texts mostly from *Brahma Dharma* quoted in the Maharshi's *Anusthan Paddhati* are suitable for the occasion. The last four texts are to be read at the sraddha of parents :

Punyam kurban punyakirtih punyasthanam smagachchati
Punyam pranan dharayati punyam pranadamuchyate

Having practised virtue, man gains pure glory and goes to pure regions. Virtue sustains life and is called the giver of life.

Dharmam shanai sanchinuyat valmikamiba puttikah
Paraloka sahayartham sarba bhutanyapidayam.

One should lay up virtue gradually, as ants make an anthill, for help in the next world, without giving trouble to any creature.

Namutrahi sahayartham pita mata cha tishthate
Na putra daram na jnati dharma tisthati kebalam

For help in the next world there exists neither the father nor the mother, neither sons nor wife nor relatives ; virtue alone exists.

Ekah prajayate jantureka eka praliyate
Eka anubhunkte sukritameka eba tu dushkrita n

Alone is a creature born and alone does he die ; alone does he enjoy the fruits of his good deeds, and alone suffer the consequences of his misdeeds

Yatoba imani bhutani jayante
Yen jatani jeevanti
Yat prayantyabhisamvishanti
Tat vijijnasasva Tat Brahma

That from which all these things are born, by which all created beings are sustained, and into which, when departed from here, they proceed and enter, that is Brahman. Desire to know Him.

Anandaddheba khalvimani bhutani jayante
Anandena jatani jeevanti
Anandam prayantyabhisambishanti

From love have all these things been born by love created things are sustained, into love they proceed and enter when they leave this world,

Yedebeha tatamutra Yadamutra tadanviha
Mrityo sa mrityum apnoti ya iha naneva pashyanti

Whatever is in this manifested world, that is there, i.e. in the absolute state of Brahma ; what is there, the same is here. He who sees here as different, meet with death again and again.

Nityonityanam chetanam chetananam
Eka vahunam yo vidadhati kaman

Tamatmastham yeh anupashyanti dheerah
Tesham shantih shashvati netaresham

He is the one Eternal in the midst of all transient things, who is the consciousness of all conscious beings, who being one, dispense unto all their desired things. The wise who see Him as dwelling in their souls attains abiding peace which is attainable unto none else.

Eshasya paramagatireshasya parama sampat
Eshasya paramaloka eshasya parama anandah.

He is the Supreme refuge of man,
He is the Supreme treasure of man,
He is the Supreme habitation of man,
He is the Supreme joy of man.

Mataram pitaranchaiba pratyaksha sakshat devatam
Matva grihee nisheveta sada sarba prayatnatah

Regarding the mother and the father as directly visible deities, the householder should serve them always with care.

Shrabaenmridulan vanin sarboda priyamacharet
Pitrorajnanusari svat sat putrah kulapavanah

The good son, who hallows his family, should speak kindly to his parents, do always what pleases them and be obedient to them.

Gurunanchaiba sarbesham mata paramako guruh
Mata gurutara bhumeh khat pitochchatarasatha

Of all honoured persons the mother is the most honoured. She is more weighty than the earth, and the father is higher than the sky.

Yan matapitarou klesham sahete sambhabe nrinam
Na tasya nishkritih shakya kartum varsha shatairapi

The trouble which the mother and the father endure when children are born, cannot be compensated even in a hundred years.

The reading and expounding of texts is followed by the reading of a life sketch of the deceased by the near relative or friend, and the offering of a prayer. The minister then prays as follows :

"Mighty God, upon this solemn occasion may we feel that we are but as dust and that thou only are real, eternally real. Here is man and in a moment he is not. Now family and friends and earthly possessions gladden and cheer us, now they are gone and the soul is launched on eternity, alone and resourceless. Therefore, we pray thee, O Eternal, to fix our hearts on things spiritual and eternal. Intensify our faith in the next world, and prepare us for life eternal. Give thou to the spirit departed all the light and glory of heaven, and though parted outwardly may we continue united in spirit. By thy infinite grace may earth be transformed into heaven, and while here, may have a foretaste of its joy and learn to live in these with thy blessed family of immortals and saints !" (from the New Samhita)

The minister then announces the *sraddha* charities and the ceremony close with a hymns or one or more *sankirtans*.

In the annual *sraddha* celebrated on the anniversary of the deceased the same ritual is adopted, excluding only the reading of a life.

Some donations are to be made to the Brahmo Samaj.

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ORDINATION OF A MISSIONARY

When a candidate for missionaryship has gone through his course of training and the period of his probation is over, a day and time is fixed for his ordination, an older missionary presiding and serving as minister. After a hymn the Secretary of the Samaj thus introduces the candidate to the minister and the congregation :

"Revered Sir and dear sisters and brethren, this respected brother of ours, who desires to serve us as a missionary, has satisfactorily passed through the course of training prescribed for him, and the period during which he was required to serve us as missionary on probation is also over. With great pleasure I beg to present him to you for ordination as a missionary and I crave for your prayers to the Lord to grant him strength to serve him."

The minister to the candidate :—Respected brother, what leads you to choose the life of a missionary ?

The candidate :—It is the Spirit of God dwelling in me. I feel that it is he who wishes me to serve him in this particular manner.

The minister :—Then it is the Lord who ordains you. I feel that I am only his instrument. Let us worship him, so that his grace may descend upon us and enable us to perform this solemn rite. Sisters and brethren, let us all approach the Lord's feet with one accord.

After another hymn, the minister conducts the usual adoration and the general prayer. After a third hymn, the minister says to the candidate :

Respected brother, will you tell us some of the leading truths which you intend to teach in the course of your missionary labours ?

The candidate :—I intend to preach : (1) The spiritual worship of the Infinite and Perfect Being, that is, worshipping him through knowledge, love and holiness, through *Dhyana*, *Aradhana* and *Prarthana*. (2) The service of God through the service of man, that is, promoting man's physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual welfare as dear to the Lord. (3) The establishment of the spiritual worship of God and of the reign of love, peace, and holiness in all families and all societies. (4) Due honour to all religious teachers and scriptures and mutual respect among the followers of different systems of religion. (5) The harmonions development of all God-given powers,—those of the body, mind, heart and soul, which to me constitutes true piety.

The minister to the candidate :—Will you tell us some of the errors and evils, social and spiritual, against which you intend to fight as a missionary ?

The candidate :—I intend to fight against : (1) Idolatry, that is, the worship of images and worship through images and through material offerings. (2) The doctrine of incarnation,—the error that the Infinite can become a man or an animal. (3) Pantheism,—the denial of a distinction between the finite and the Infinite, the creature and the Creator. (4) Mediatorship, the denial of a direct revelation of God to the human soul and the setting up of particular men or books as ways of salvation. (5) Caste, —the division of society into hereditary classes excluded from social intercourse with one another. (6) Priestcraft,—the notion that the mere office of a priest, irrespectively

of the way in which it is discharged, carries special honour or sancitity with it. (7) The subjection of women,—the denial to women, in part or whole, of the rights of developing her God-given powers and serving her kind.

The minister to the candidate :—What is your idea of the church you are going specially to serve, and what will be your attitude towards it and your relation to it ?

The candidate :—I believe the Brahmo Samaj, specially the Samaj, to which I have given my particular adherence, to be a divine institution, commissioned by God to live and preach the truest of religions, the best way to salvation. As such, it will always command not only my hearty love, but also my loyal obedience. As a servant of the church, I shall always follow the counsel and guidance of its representative council and its responsible officers.

The minister then delivers his charge in the following manner .

"Respected brother, it is now my solemn duty in the name of the all-holy God and his servants, the members of the Samaj, to ordain you as its missionary, and I do so with the greatest pleasure. As a fellow-worker of yours, I welcome you heartily in this field. It is not quite unknown to you, and as you work on, you will know it more ; and the Spirit of God working in you through your experience, will teach you far more about your duties than I can hope to do in the course of the words I am addressing you. Nevertheless, I shall say a few words to you, which, as they are spoken on this solemn occasion, may be of particular use to you. You have spoken of certain errors which you will combat. You know that building and breaking are both parts of the work of the Brahma Samaj,—building for

its own sake and breaking not for its own sake, but for the sake of building. You will always remember that it is the aim and object of the Brahma Samaj to build a healthy, religious and social life. Be that the aim and object of your labour also. Where you have not succeeded in building, be it more or less, you must regard your labour as fruitless. Mere breaking is no part of a preacher's work, and I warn you not to take delight in it, as youthful enthusiasts often do."

"But to build,—to build the new and the healthy,—you will often find it necessary to break.—to break even things that have enjoyed the love and reverence of ages. Such breaking will cause pain, often great pain, and bring unpopularity and persecution upon you. Such things you must regard as a necessary sacrifice for the establishment of truth. You will see, from the history of religion in this country, and more or less in all countries, that much harm has been done to true religion by misplaced tenderness shewn to errors and to social customs and systems of religious practice based on selfishness."

"The history of religion in general and the history of the Brahma Samaj in particular, will also teach you that Theism, the true religion, though an eternal truth, eternal as God himself, in whom it exists and from whom it comes, is nevertheless being gradually and progressively revealed to man. Its first revelation to man is at least as old as the Vedic seers and the Jewish patriarchs, but how it has grown to purity and fullness during the ages that have followed till it seems now to be quite a new religion,—a new dispensation given to men of this age and generation! Really it is as old as the first man who knew and worshipped God and as new as our latest insight into the nature of God. I would ask you, my dear friend, always to remember this progressive nature of Theism, to note the steps of its progress so far as you can, in its long history, to avoid the local and personal errors with which it has often allied itself and to hold to its essence and its ideal purity and fullness so far as you can conceive it. Even in the short history of the Brahma Samaj, you will find it has often halted and refused, either through ignorance, weakness or deference to old systems, to proceed and welcome new revelations and reforms. But the spirit of God has always been with it and led it to fresh and fuller forms. Beware, my friend, how you mistake any particular form of Brahmaism, even though identified with great and honoured names, as final, shut your eyes to fresh revelations of God, and with langour and indolence unworthy of a Brahma and a missionary, oppose needed reforms in the Samaj and the country."

"One thing more I would ask you on this occasion to remember. You know we have set our face against the old asceticism based on an erroneous division of the world between God and the Devil or between *Brahman* and *Maya*. To us flesh and the spirit are both from God and we think that the cravings and necessities of the body are as well to be cared for as the demands of the soul."

"But this sound view of the world does not mean that there is no higher and lower in our nature, no subordination of one part to another and no need for sacrificing one class of interests to another. Though we must take care of all parts of our nature, we should never forget that the physical is lower than the intellectual and the moral, and related to the latter as means to end, and that the merely intellectual and moral are subordinate to the spiritual, by which they are hallowed and perfected. This being the case and conflict being the God-appointed way to

progress, the lower life always has to suffer and its interests have to be sacrificed whenever there is a conflict between the two In all higher things, in science, in art, in social and political reform, not to speak of religion, progress has always been made through sacrifice,—the sacrifice of comfort and pleasure, of popularity and friendship and even of life. The devotees of pleasure, and the seekers of wealth and comfort of their own sake, have never done any noteworthy service to their kind. Be prepared then, my brother, for a good deal of sacrifice in the life you are going to adopt—the sacrifice not only of popularity among those whose cherished views and vested interests you will have to oppose in discharge of your duty as the missionary of a militant church, and of the ordinary pleasures of life, pleasures which you will see thousands enjoying around you, but often of the barest necessaries of life. The missionary has always been poor and will perhaps always be so. This seems to be not a passing accident. but a providential dispensation.

True and real religion always implies sacrifice,—the inward, if not always the outward, sacrifice of all that the world holds dear and valuable. The value of religion is felt in proportion to the value of the things sacrificed for its sake. It seems reasonable, therefore, that the giving of religion, which cannot be done unless it has filled and overfilled our heart and life,—should entail the greatest sacrifice ever required of men. While embracing the life of a missionary, therefore, embrace, poverty, my friend, as its inevitable price. But if the price of the life is great, great also is its reward. If you ever feel depressed in the way you are going to travel, think of those who have preceded you in the same path,—the poor ones of the earth, the Buddhas and Christs—the poorest as well as the richest. and remember

that if you share in their poverty, you share also in their glory, —the glory of giving to the world what you believe to be the best and greatest of things—the love and service of your Father and your God."

The ceremony closes with the minister's prayer and a hymn, after which the newly ordained missionary pays his respects to the ministers and other elders and leaders of the church and receives their blessings.

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FAMILY PRAYER FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BRAHMA SAMAJ ON THE OCCASION OF ITS ANNIVERSARY

On the day fixed for prayer for the welfare of the Brahma Samaj on the occasion of its anniversary, the members of the family meet together and after the head of the family or a minister has conducted invocation and adoration in the usual form, with special reference to the occasion, he prays in the following manner :

"O Lord of the Brahmo Samaj, our Father and Saviour, we offer our heartfelt gratitude to thee for the establishment of the Brahma Samaj for our salvation and the salvation of the whole world. Through ages past thou hast prepared our nation for the propagation of thy true religion. We remember with gratitude the sages, saints, law-givers, preachers a d reformers whom thou hast raised from time to time to prepare us for the great day that has now shone on us. We think gratefully of the great events which have moulded the life and character of our nation. Often have we sinned against thee and thy children,—sinned deeply and grievously,—but thou hast, in thy infinite mercy, brought out good out of these evils, and by chastising us hast cured and corrected us through our trials and tribulations. We thank thee most heartily for sending us the great leaders, preachers, writers and workers who have moulded the thought and life of our Samaj and for those

great teachers of other countries who have helped us to understand the great truth and live the ideal life.

We thank thee with all our hearts for having called us to this society to worship and serve thee and preach thy truth with our precept and example. How unworthy we feel of thy gift ? How dim is o ır faith, how cold our hearts, how weak and sluggish our wills ! Inspire us with thy spirit on this holy occasion. Let us vividly feel thy presence and thy ever-active l ve. Let us feel one another as brothers and sisters and stir ourselves for one another's happiness and improvement. Make us feel our great responsibility in knowing thy truth and and being entrusted with the great task of establishing the kingdom of truth and love. How tremendous is the task before us and how weak are we ! But thou hast chosen us as thy instruments, thou wilt surely make us worthy of serving thee. I stablish thy kingdom in every heart and in every family and infuse heavenly strength into every one of us. Prepare us for entering into thy great festival. May thy grace be profusely showered on this holy occasion and may it draw us nearer than ever to thee and to thy children in holy love and service.

The service closes with a hymn.

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OPENING OF A NEW MANDIR

Church-Building

The congregation of the Samaj meets in the old place of worship and after a prayer or short service starts towards the new building in a solemn procession. A suitable *sankirtan* or street-song is sung by the party with the accompaniment of musical instruments. Flags containing Brahma mottoes, such as *Ekamevadvi iyam, Satyameva Jayate* and *Brahmakripa hi Kevalam*, are carried with the procession. On the arrival of the party at the *Mandir*, the President or some other chosen member of the Samaj offers a short prayer and opens the doors of the building. When the congregation and visitors have entered and taken their seats, the Secretary of the Samaj, reads a declaration, to the following effect, of the aims and objects of the Samaj :—

* This day, the.....day of.....
in the year.....we dedicate this building to the worship of the one true God. From this day its doors shall be open to all classes of people without distinction of caste or social position. All classes of men and women, old or young, wise or ignorant, rich or poor, will meet here as sisters and brethren to worship him who is the author of our salvation. God alone shall be worshipped here, and not any created person or thing, and no divine honours

* Taken with slight alterations from Pandit Sivanath Sstri's History of the Brahmo Samaj.

shall be paid to any man or woman as God, or equal to God or an incarnation of God or as specially appointed by God. It shall ever be borne in mind in this hall that the great mission of Brahmaism is to promote spiritual freedom amongst men and enable them to establish direct relationship with God, and the services, discourses and prayers of this place shall be so moulded as to help that spirit of freedom. It shall ever be its aim and endeavour to enable all who thirst after righteousness to know God, who is the life of our life, and to worship him directly.

The catholicity of Brahmaism shall also be preserved here. No book or man shall ever be acknowledged here as infallible and the only way to salvation ; but nevertheless due respect shall be paid to all scriptures and the good and great of all ages and countries. In the sermons, discourses and prayers used in this hall, no scripture or religious society or the founder of such a society shall ever be ridiculed, reviled or spoken of with contempt. It is in a reverent spirit that untruth shall be exposed and truth vindicated. No man or class of men shall here be regarded as the elect or favourite of God and the rest of mankind as lost to that favour. Anything calculated to compromise this catholic spirit shall never be countenanced.

The spirituality of our faith shall be carefully maintained here. Flowers, spices burnt offerings, candles and other usual accompaniments of idolatrous worship shall never be used. Care shall be taken to avoid everything leading to reduce religion to mere parade and lifeless form.

It shall be the object of all our preachings and discourses in this place to teach men and women to love God, to seek piety, to hate sin, to grow in devotion and spirituality to promote purity amongst men and women, to uproot all social evils, and to encourage virtuous deeds. Anything that will directly or indirectly encourage idolatry, engender superstition, take away spiritual freedom, lower conscience, or corrupt morals, shall never be countenanced here. May this hall ever remain a refuge and resting place for all weary sojourners in this world! May the sinner find hope and consolation here, may the weak be strengthened, and may all who hunger and thirst find food and drink for their souls! With this hope and prayer we dedicate this building to the one true God. May he help and guide us in carrying out our objects! *Brahmakripa he Kevalam.*

This is followed by regular service in the usual form.

In laying the foundation stone of a Samaj building the same ritual may be followed with certain variations. After the *Sankirtan* party has arrived at the chosen spot, which is canopied and provided with seats, the President, Secretary or some other chosen member of the Samaj, after offering a short prayer, reads aloud the following inscription engraved on a piece of stone or written on a parchment roll.

This day, the ... ... day of ... ... in the year ... ..., the foundation stone of the ... ... Brahmo Samaj is laid.

He then lays the stone in the foundation prepared by the masons and again offers a prayer. A stone bottle containing the parchment roll and the latest numbers of the Samaj organs or other current newspapers are also placed in the foundation. The foundation is then covered with the prepared material with the help of trowel. In this part of the ceremony other members of the Samaj may follow the leading member. This is followed by the usual service.

The Trust-deed of the Samaj is prepared with the help of a competent lawyer and red on the occasion of both the foundation and the opening ceremony along with the declaration of aims and objects.

CONSECRATION OF NEWLY BUILT DWELLING HOUSE

On the day fixed for the consecration, the new house is adorned with flags and floral decorations and furnished with, in addition to other useful things, portraits of good and great men including those of the three great leaders of the Brahma movement, Raja Rammohan Ray, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and Brahmananda Kesavchandra Sen. Mottoes like *Ekamevadvitiyam*, *Satyameva Jayate* and *Brahmokripahe Kevalam* are also hung in frames. The family leaves the old house after a short service and as many members as can proceed to the new house in a procession singing hymns. On arrival at the door of the new house, the minister offers a short prayer and opening the admits the members and guests. All meet in the room set apart for family prayers or in that fixed for the ceremony, and the minister conducts service in the usual form with special reference in the *Udbodhan* and the *Aradhana* to that occasion. After the third hymn, the master of the house or the minister offers the following prayer :

> O Thou, our family Deity, our Father, Mother, Friend, Guide and Saviour, we approach thee with our heartfelt gratitude for giving us this new dwelling place. Thou, in thy infinite love, hast guided every step in its construction, providing the materials, giving strength and skill to the builders and bringing the whole to successful completion. For all thy unspeakable kindness we bow down to thee in profund thankfulness.

May we always remember thy kindness and henceforth love and serve thee more truly then ever !

Make this house a real temple of thine from which the incense of adoration and prayer will daily rise up to thee. May reverence and love be the guiding principles of every members of this household. In all the comforts and pleasures we shall enjoy in this house, may we gratefully remember thee as Giver ! In all the trials and troubles that may come upon us, may we lean on thee with trust and resignation ! May all our dealings with one another be pervaded by a spirit of kindness and sweetness ! May we always feel that we are one, and share in each other's joys and sorrows successes and falures ! May all guests and visitors meet with a loving and respectful welcome here, and may the poor and needy have our ready sympathy and support !

May this house be an institution of theBrahma Samaj, ever helping its cause by prayers, pecuniary contribution, and active co-operation with its leaders and workers ! May every good endeavour after the improvement of this country and the welfare of humanity in general draw our hearty sympathy and such support as it in our power to render ! And may we always remember, in all that we think, feel and do, that thou art our goal, the end of which everything else is a means, and that this house, with all its comforts and joys, is only a place of sojourn, and thou alone our Eternal Home !

Some donations are to be made to the Brahma Samaj.

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THANKS-GIVING FOR RECOVERY FROM ILLNESS

My loving Father and Mother, I approach thee with the most heartfelt gratitude for the recovery thou hast granted me from my long and painful illness. I broke thy laws, thy beneficent laws for preserving health, and thou chosest, in thy infinite wisdom and love, to try and warn me. I thank thee for this solemn warning and shall ever after be more carefully obedient to thy will. Thou hast chastened my spirit, made me feel my helplessness and taught me to be grateful to thee and to thy children. Thy love worked through my physician, my relatives and my friends in my hour of sore trial. Thy wisdom guided the skill of my doctor and thy healing power worked through the drugs that were administered to me. When I could not think of myself. thou madest others think of me and anxious for me. wonderful is the sympathy, a ray of thy infinite goodness, which made others feel my sufferings as theirs and strive with all their might to remove them ! Unspeakable is my gratitude for all the labours and self-sacrifices through which thou hast led my friends and relatives, my nurses and servants. And I thank thee most heartily that, though laid up in bed and unable to serve thee with my body, I was yet granted the power of remembering thee and feeling thy loving presence now and then in the midst of my illness. How these precious moments of communion supported my spirit in my hour of trial ! And now, O loving Father, as thou hast given

me renewed health and strength, enable me to love and serve thee more truly than ever. May I feel that this earthly life, with its joys and sorrows, failures and successes, is only a means of cultivating eternal union with thee, and that this frail body, which seemed about to break down in this last illness, and this world itself, are only temporary habitations for the soul and thou its true home and companion for ever and ever !

Some donations are to be made to the Brahma Samaj.

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Appendix

THE SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT, 1954

(43 of 1954)

(An modified up to the 1st October, 1967)

An Act to provide a special form of marriage in certain cases, for the registration of such and certain other marriages and for divorce.

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows :—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

Short title, extent and commencement

1. (*1*) This Act may be called the Special Marriage Act 1954.

(*2*) It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and applies also to citizens of India domiciled in the territories to which this Act extends who are outside the said territories.

(*3*) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.'[1]

Definitions

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) "consular officer" means a consul-general, consul, vice-consul, pro-consul or consular agent :

(*b*) "degress of prohibited relationship"—a man and any of the persons mentioned in Part I of the First Schedule and a woman and any of the persons mentioned in Part II of the said Schedule are within the degrees of prohibited relationship.

Explanation I.—Relationship includes—

(a) relationship by half or uterine blood as well as by full blood.

b) il legitimate; blood relationship as well as legitimate.

(*c*) relationship by adoption as well as by blood.

and all terms of relationship in this Act shall be construed accordingly.

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1. 1st January, 1955, *vide* Notification No. S. R. O. 3606, dated 17th December, 1954. Gazettee of India, Extraordinary, 1954, Part II, Section 3. page 2463.

The Act has has been extended to Dadra and Nagar Haveli by Reg. 6 of 1963, s 2 and Sch. 1, and to Pondichery by Reg. 7, of 1963, s, 3 and Sch. I.

Explanation II.—'Full blood" and "half blood",—two persons are said to be related to each other by full blood when they are descended from a common ancestor by the same wife and by half blood when they are descended from a common ancestor by the same wife and by half blood when they are descended from a common ancestor but by different wives.

Explanation III.—"Uterine blood", two persons are said to be related to each other by uterine blood when they are descended from a common ancestress but by different husbands.

Explanantion IV.—In explanations II and III, "ancestor" includes the father and "ancestress" the mother ;

(*c*) "diplomatic officer" means an ambassador, envoy, minister, *charge d' affaires*, high commissioner, commissioner or other diplomatic representative, or a counsellor or secretary of an embassy, legation or high commission ;

(*d*) "district", in relation to a Marriage Officer, means the area for which he is appointed as such under sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) of section 3 ,

(*e*) "district court" means the principal civil court of original jurisdiction, and where there is a city civil court that court ;

(*f*) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act ;

[1][(*g*) "State Government", in relation to a Union territory, means the administrator thereof.]

1. Subs. by the Adaptation of Laws (No. 3) Order, 1956, for the original cl. (g).

Marriage Officers

3. (1) For the purposes of this Act, the State Government may, by notification in the OfficialGazette, appoint one or more Marriage officers for the whole or any part of the State.

(2) For the purposes of the Act in its application to citizens of India domiciled in the territories to which this Act extends who are outside the said territories, the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette,—

(a) in the case of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, specify such officers of the Central Government as it may think fit to be the Marriage Officers for the State or any part thereof ; and

(*b*) in the case of any other country, place or area appoint such diplomatic or consular officers as it may think fit to be the Marriage Officers for the country, place or area.

CHAPTER II

SOLEMINIZATION OF SPECIAL, MARRIAGES

Conditions relating to solemnization of special marriages.

4. Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force relating to the solemnization of marriages, a marriage between any two persons may be solemnized under this Act, if at the time of the marriage the following conditions are fulfilled, namely :—

(a) neither party has a spouse living ;

(*b*) neither party is an idiot or a lunatic ;

(*c*) the male has completed the age of twenty-one years and the female the age of eighteen years ;

[1][(*d*) the parties are not within the degrees of prohibited relationship :

Provided that where a custom governing at least one of the parties permits of a marriage between them, such marriage may be solemnized, notwithstanding that they are within the degrees of prohibited relationship ; and]

(*e*) where the marriage is solemnized outside the territories to which this Act extends, both parties are citizens of India domiciled in the said territories.

1. Subs. by Act 33 of 1963, s. 2, for cl. (*d*)

[2][*Explanation*—In this section, "custom", in relation to a person belonging to any tribe, community, group or family, means any rule which the State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazettee specify in this behalf as applicable to members of that tribe, community, group or family :

Provided that no such notification shall be issued in relation to the members of any tribe, company, group or family, unless the State Government is satisfied—

(*i*) that such rule has been continuously and uniformly observed for a long time among those members ;

(*ii*) that such rule is certain and not unreasonable or opposed to public policy ;

iii) that such rule, if applicable only to a family, has not been discontinued by the family.]

Notice of intended marriage

5. When a marriage is intended to be solemnized under this Act, the parties to the marriage shall give notice thereof in writing in the from specified in the Second Schedule to the Marriage Officer of the district in which at least one of the parties to the marriage has resided for a period of not less than thirty days immediately preceding the date on which such notice is given.

Marriage Notice Book and publication

6. (*1*) The Marriage Officer shall keep all notices given under section 5 with the records of his notice and shall also forthwith enter a true copy of every such notice in a book pres-

2. Ins. by s. 2, *ibid.*

cribed for that purpose, to be called the Marriage Notice Book, and such book shall be open for inspection at all reasonable times, without fee, by any person desirous of inspecting the same.

(2) The Marriage Officer shall cause every such notice to be published by affixing a copy thereof to some conspicuous place in his office.

(3) Where either of the parties to an intended marriage is not permanently residing within the local limits of the district of the Marriage Officer to whom the notice has been given under section 5, the Marriage Officer shall also cause a copy of such notice to be transmitted to the Marriage Officer of the district within whose limits such party is permanently residing, and that Marriage Officer shall thereupon cause a copy thereof to be affixed to some conspicious place in his office.

Objection to marriage

7. (1) Any person may, before the expiration of thirty days from the date on which any such notice has been published under sub-section (2) of section 6, object to the marriage on the ground that it would contravene one or more of the conditions specified in section 4.

(2) After the expiration of thirty days from the date on which notice of an intended marriage has been published under sub-section (2) of section 6, the marriage may be solemnized, unless it has been previously objected to under sub-section (1).

(3) The nature of the objection shall be recorded in writing by the Marriage Officer in the Marriage Notice Book, be read over and explained, if necessary, to the person making the objection and shall be signed by him or on his behalf.

Procedure on receipt of objection

8. (1) If an objection is made under section 7 to an intended marriage, the Marriage Officer shall not solemnize the Marriage until he has inquired into the matter of the objection and is satisfied that it ought not to prevent the solemnization of the marriage or the objection is withdrawn by the person making it; but the Marriage Officer shall not take more than thirty days from the date of the objection for the purpose of inquiring into the matter of the objection and arriving at a decision.

(2) If the Marriage Officer upholds the objection and refuses to solemnize the marriage, either party to the intended marriage may, within a period of thirty days from the date of such refusal, prefer an appeal to the district court within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the Marriage Officer has his office, and the decision of the district court on such appeal shall be final, and the Marriage Officer shall act in conformity with the decision of the court.

Powers of Marriage Officers in respect of inquiries.

9. (1) For the purpose of any inquiry under section 8, the Marriage Officer shall have all the powers vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, when trying a suit in respect of the following matters, namely :—

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of witnesses and examining them on oath ;

(b) discovery and inspection ;

(c) compelling the production of documents ;

(d) reception of evidence on affidavits ; and

(e) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses ;

and any proceeding before the Marriage Officer shall be deemed to be a judicial proceeding within the meaning of section 193 of the Indian Penal Code.

Explanation.—For the purpose of enforcing the attendance of any person to give evidence, the local limits of the jurisdiction of the Marriage Officer shall be the local limits of his district.

(2) If it appears to the Marriage Officer that the objection made to an intended marriage is not reasonable and has not been made in good faith he may impose on the person objecting costs by way of compensation not exceeding one thousand rupees and award the whole or any part thereof to the parties to the intended marriage, and any order for costs so made may be executed in the same manner as a decree passed by the district court within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the Marriage Officer has his office.

Procedure on receipt of objection by Marriage Officer abroad.

10. Where an objection is made under section 7 to a Marriage Officer outside the territories to which this Act extends in respect of an intended marriage outside the said territories, and the Marriage Officer, after making such inquiry into the matter as he thinks fit entertains a doubt in respect thereof, he shall not solemnize the marriage but shall transmit the record with such statement respecting the matter as he thinks fit to the Central Government, and the Central Government, after making such inquiry into the matter and after obtaining such advise as it thinks fit, shall give its decision thereon in writing to the Marriage Officer who shall act in conformity with the decision of the Central Government.

Declaration by parties and witnesses.

11. Before the marriage is solemnized the parties and three witnesses shall in the presence of the Marriage Officer, sign a declaration in the form specified in the Third Schedule to this Act, and the declaration shall be countersigned by the Marriage Officer.

Place and form of Solemnization

12. (*1*) The marriage may be solemnized at the office of the Marriage Officer, or at such other place within a reasonable distance therefrom as the parties may desire, and upon such conditions and the payment of such additional fees as may be prescribed.

(2) The marriage may be solemnized in any from which the parties may choose to adopt :

Provided that it shall not be complete and binding on the parties, unless each party says to the other in the presence of the Marriage Officer and the three witnesses and in any language understood by the parties,—"I, (A), take thee (B), to be my lawful wife (or) husband.

Certificate of marriage

13. (*1*) When the marriage has been solemnized, the Marriage Officer shall enter a certificate thereof in the form specified in the Fourth Schedule in a book to be kept by him for that purpose and to be called the Marriage Certificate Book and such certificate shall be signed by the parties to the marriage and the three witnesses.

(2) On a certificate being entered in the Marriage Certificate Book by the Marriage Officer, the Certificate shall be deemed to be conclusive evidence of the fact that a marriage under this Act has been solemnized and that all formalities respecting the signatures of witnesses have been complied with.

New notice when marriage not solemnized within three months

14. Whenever a marriage is not solemnized within three calendar months from the date on which notice thereof has been given to the Marriage Officer as required by section 5, or where an appeal has been filed under sub-section (2) of section 8, within three months from the date of the decision of the district court on such special or, where the record of a case has been transmitted to the Central Government under section 10, within three months from the date of decision of the Central Government, the notice and all other proceedings arising thereform shall be deemed to have lapsed, and no Marriage Officer shall solemnize the marriage until a new notice has been given in the manner laid down in this Act.

CHAPTER III

REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES CELEBRATED IN OTHER FORMS

15. Any marriage celebrated, whether before or after the commencement of this Act, other than a marriage solemnized under the [1]Special Marriage Act, 1872,* or under this Act, may be registered under this Chapter by a Marriage Officer in the territories to which this Act extends if the following conditions are fulfilled, namely :—

(a) a ceremony of marriage has been performed between the parties and they have been living together as husband and wife ever since ;

(b) neither party has at the time of registration more than one spouse living ;

(c) neither party is an idiot or a lunatic at the time of registration.

(d) the parties have completed the age of twenty-one years at the time of registration.

(e) the parties are not within the degrees of prohibited relationship :

Provided that in the case of a marriage celebrated before the commencement of this Act, this condition shall be subject to any

1. Rep. b rhis Act, s. 51.

*Act 3 of 1872.

law, custom or usage having the force of law governing each of them which permits of a marriage between the two ; and

(f) the parties have been residing within the district of the Marriage Officer for a period of not lets than thirty days, immediately preceeding the date on which the application is made to him for registration of the marriage.

Procedure for registration

16. Upon receipt of an application signed by both the parties to the marriage for the registration of their marriage under this Chapter, the Marriage Officer shall give public notice thereof in such manner as may be prescribed and after allowing a period of thirty days for objections and after hearing any objection received within that period, shall, if satisfied that all the conditions mentioned in section 15 are fulfilled, enter a certificate of the marriage in the Marriage Certificate Book in the form specified in the Fifth Schedule, and such certificate shall be signed by the parties to the marriage and by three witnesses.

Appeals from orders under section 16

17. Any person aggrieved by any order of a Marriage Officer refusing to register a marriage under this Chapter may, within thirty days from the date of the order, appeal against that order to the district court within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the Marriage Officer has his office, and the decision of the district court on such appeal shall be final, and the Marriage Officer to whom the application was made shall act in conformity with such decision.

Effect of registration of marriage under this Chapter

18. Subject to the orovisions contained in sub-section (2) of section 24, where a certificate of marriage has been finally entered in the Marriage Certificate Book under this Chapter, the marriage shall as from the date of such entry, be deemed to be a marriage solemnized under this Act, and all children born after the date of the ceremony of marriage (whose names shall also be entered in the Marriage certificate Book) shall in all respects be deemed to be and always to have been the legitimate children of their parents :

Provided that nothing contained in this section shall be construed as conferring upon any such children any rights in or to the property of any person other than their parents in any case where, but for the passing of this Act, such children would have been incapable of possessing or acquiring any such rights by reason of their not being the legitimate children of their parents.

CHAPTER IV

CONSEQUENCES OF MARRIAGE UNDER THIS ACT

Effect of marriage on members of undivided family.

19. The marriage solemnized under this Act of any member of an undivided family who professes the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jaina religion shall be deemed to effect his severance from such family.

Rights and disabilities not affected by Act.

20. Subject to the provisions of section 19, any person whose marriage is solemnzied under this Act, shall have the same rights and shall be subject to the same disabilities in regard to the right of succession to any property as a person to whom the Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1950 applies.

Succession to property of parties married under Act.

21. Notwithstanding any restrictions contained in the Indian Succession Act, 1925, with respect to its application to members of certain communities, succession to the property of any person whose marriage is solemnized under this Act and to the property of the issue of such marriage shall be regulated by the provisions of the said Act and for the purposes of this section that Act shall have effect as if Chapter III of Part V (Special Rules for Parsi Intestates) had been omitted therefrom.

CHAPTER V

RESTITUTION OF CONJUGAL RIGHTS AND JUDICIAL SEPARATION

22. When either the husband or the wife has, without reasonable excuse, withdrawn from the society of the other, the aggrieved party may apply by petition to the district court for restitution of conjugal rights, and the court, on being satisfied of the truth of the statements made in such petition, and that there is no legal ground why the application should not be granted, may decree restitution of conjugal rights accordingly.

Judicial separation

23. *(1)* A petition for judicial separation may be presented to the district court either by the husband or the wife,—

(a) on any of the grounds specified in section 27 [other than the grounds specified in clauses *(i)* and *(j)* thereof] on which a petition for divorce might have been presented , or

(b) on the ground of failure to comply with a decree for restitution of conjugal rights ; and the court, on being satisfied of the truth of the statements made in such petition, and that there is no legal ground why the application should not be granted, may be decree judicial separation accordingly.

(2) Where the court grants a decree for judicial separation, it shall be no longer obligatory for the petitioner to cohabit with the respondent, but the court may, on the application by petition of either party and on being satisfied of the truth of the statements made in such petition, rescind the decree if it considers it just and reasonable to do so.

CHAPTER VI

NULLITY OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Void marriages

24. *(1)* Any marriage solemnized under this Act shall be null and void and may be so declared by a decree of nullity if—

(*i*) any of the conditions specified in clauses (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (d) of section 4 has not been fulfilled ; or

(*ii*) the respondent was impotent at the time of the marriage and at the time of the institution of the suit.

(*2*) Nothing contained in this section shall apply to any marriage deemed to be solemnized under this Act within the meaning of section 18, but the registration of any such marriage under Chapter III may be declared to be of no effect if the registration was in contravention of any of the conditions in clauses (*a*) to (*e*) of section 15 :

Provided that no such declaration shall be made in any case where an appeal has been preferred under section 17 and the decision of the district court has become final.

Voidable marriages

25. Any marriage solemnized under this Act shall be voidable and may be annulled by a decree of nullity if,—

(*i*) marriage has not been consummated owing to the wilful refusal of the respondent to consummate the marriage ; or

(*ii*) the respondent was at the time of the marriage pregnant by some person other than the petitioner , or

(*iii*) the consent of either party to the marriage was obtained by coercion of fraud, as defined in the Indian Contract Act, 1872.

Provided that, in the case specified in clause (*ii*), the court shall not grant a decree unless it is satisfied,—

(*a*) that the petitioner was at the time of the marriage ignorant of the facts alleged ;

(*b*) that proceedings were instituted within a year from the date of the marriage ; and

(*c*) that marital intercourse with the consent of the petitioner has not taken place since the discovery by the petitioner of the existence of the grounds for a decree :

Provided further that in the case specified in clause (*iii*), the court shall not grant a decree if,—

(*a*) proceedings have not been instituted within one year after the coercion had ceased or, as the case be, the fraud had been discovered ; or

(*b*) the petitioner has with his or her free consent lived with the other party to the marriage as husband and wife after the coercion had ceased or, as the case be, the fraud had been discovered.

Legitimacy of children of void and voidable marriages

26. Where a decree of nullity is granted in respect of any marriage under section 24 or section 25, any child begotten before the decree is made who would have been the legitimate child of the parties to the marriage if it had been dissolved instead of being declared to be null and void or annulled by a

decree of nullity shall be deemed to be their legitimate child notwithstanding the decree of nullity :

Provided that nothing contained in this section shall be construed as conferring upon any child of a marriage which is declared to be null and void or annulled by a decree of nullity any rights in or to the property of any person other than the parents in any case where, but for the passing of this Act, such child would have been incapable of possessing or acquiring any such right by reason of his not being the legitimate child of his parents.

Divorce

27. Subject to the provisions of this Act and to the rules made thereunder, a petition for divorce may be presented to the district court either by the husband or the wife on the ground that the respondent—

(*a*) has since the solemnization of the marriage committed adultery ; or

(*b*) has deserted the petitioner without cause for a period of at least three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition ; or

c) is undergoing a sentence of imprisonment for seven years or more for an offence as defined in the Indian Penal Code :

Provided that divorce shale not be granted on this ground unless the respondent has prior to the presentation of the petition undergone at least three years imprisonment out of said period of seven years ; or

(*d*) has since the solemnization of the marriage treated the petitioner with cruelty ;

(*e*) has been incurably of unsound mind for a continuous period of not less than three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition ; or

(*f*) has for a period of not less than three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition been suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form, the disease not having been contracted from the petitioner ; or

(*g*) has for a period of not less than three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition been suffering from leprosy, the disease not having been contracted from the petitioner ; or

(*h*) has not been heard of as being alive for a period of seven years or more by those persons who would naturally have heard of the respondent if the respondent had been alive ; or

(*i*) has not resumed cohabitation for a period of two years or upwards after the passing of a decree for judicial separation against the respondent ; or

(*j*) has failed to comply with a decree for restitution of conjugal rights for a period of two years or upwards after the passing of the decree against the respondent ,

and by the wife on the ground that her husband has, since the solemnization of the marriage, been guilty of rape, sodomy or bestiality.

Divorce by mutual consent

28. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act and to the rules made thereunder, a petition for divorce may be presented

to the district court by both the parties together on the ground that they have been living separately for a period of one year or more, that they have not been able to live together and that they have mutually agreed that the marriage should be dissolved.

(2) On the motion of both the parties made not earlier than one year after the date of the presentation of the petition referred to in sub-section (1) and not later than two years after the said date, if the petition is not withdrawn in the meantime, the district court shall, on being satisfied, after hearing the parties and after making such inquiry as it thinks fit, that a marriage has been solemnized under this Act, and that the averments in the petition are true, pass a decree declaring the marriage to be dissolved with effect from the date of the decree.

Restriction on petitions for divorce during first three years after marriage

29. (1) No petition for divorce shall be presented to the district court unless at the date of the presentation of the petition three years have passed since the date of entering the certificate of marriage in the Marriage Certificate Book:

Provided that the district court may, upon application being made to it, allow a petition to be presented before three years have passed on the ground that the case is one of exceptional hardship suffered by the petitioner or of exceptional depravity on the part of the respondent, but if it appears to the district court at the hearing of the petition that the petitioner obtained leave to present the petition by any misrepresentation or concealment of the nature of the case, the district court may, if it pronounces a decree, do so subject to the condition that the decree shall

not have effect until after the expiry of three years from the date of the marriage or may dismiss the petition, without prejudice to any petition, which may be brought after the expiration of the said three years upon the same, or substantially the same, facts as those proved in support of the petition so dismissed.

(2) In disposing of any application under this section for leave to present a petition for divorce before the expiration of three years from the date of the marriage, the district court shall have regard to the interests of any children of the marriage, and to the question whether there is a reasonable probability of a reconciliation between the parties before the expiration of the said three years.

Remarriage of divorced persons

30. Where a marriage has been dissolved by a decree of divorce, and either there is no right of appeal against the decree or if there is such a right of appeal, the time for appealing has expired without an appeal having been presented, or an appeal has been presented but has been dismissed, and one year has elapsed thereafter but not sooner, either party to the marriage may marry again.

—o—

CHAPTER VII

JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURE

Court to which petition should be made

31. (*1*) Every petition under Chapter V or Chapter VI shall be presented to the direct court within the local limits of which jurisdiction the marriage was solemnized or the husband and wife reside or last resided together.

(*2*) Without prejudice to any jurisdiction exercisable by the court under sub-section (1), the district court may, by virtue of this sub-section entertain a petition by a wife domiciled in the territories to which this Act extends for nullity of marriage or for divorce if she is resident in the said territories and has been ordinarily resident therein for a period of three years immediately preceeding the presentation of the petition and the husband is not resident in the territories.

Contents and verification of petitions

32. (*1*) Every petition under Chapter V or Chapter VI shall state, as distinctly as the nature of the case permits, the facts on which the claim to relief is founded, and shall also state that there is no children between the petitioner and the other party to the marriage.

(*2*) The statements contained in every such petition should be verified by the petitioner or some other competent person in the manner reqired by law for the verification of plaints and may, at the hearing, be referred to as evidence.

Proceedings may be in camera

33. A proceeding under this Act shall be conducted *in camera* if either party thereto so desires or if the district court so thinks fit to do.

Duty of court in passing de Crees

34. (*1*) In any proceeding under Chapter V or Chapter VI, whether defended or not, if the court is satisfied that,—

(*a*) any of the grounds for granting relief exists ; and

(*b*) where the ground of the petition is adultery, the petitioner has not in any manner been accessory to or connived at or condoned the adultery, or, where ground of the petition is cruelty, the petitioner has not in any manner condoned the cruelty ; and

(*c*) when divorce is sought on the ground of mutual consent, such consent has not been obtained by force, fraud or undue influence ; and

(*d*) the petition is not presented or prosecuted in collusion with the respondent ; and

(*e*) there has not been any unnecessary or improper delay in instituting the proceeding , and

(*f*) there is no other legal ground why the relief should not be granted ;

then, and in such a case, but not otherwise, the court shall decree such relief accordingly.

(*2*) Before proceeding to grant any relief under this Act it shall be the duty of the court in the first instance, in every case where it is possible so to do consistently with the nature and

circumstances of the case, to make every endeavour to bring about a reconciliation between the parties.

Relief to respondent on petition for divorce

35. If in proceeding for divorce, the respondent opposes the relief sought on the ground of the petitioner's adultery, cruelty or desertion, the court may give to the respondent the same relief to which he or she would have been entitled if he or she had presented a petition seeking such relief.

Alimony *pendente lite*

36. Where in any proceeding Chapter V or Chapter VI it appears to the district court that the wife has no independent income sufficient for her support and the necessary expenses of the proceeding, it may, on the application of the wife, order the husband to pay to her the expenses of the proceeding, and weekly or monthly during the proceeding such sum as, having regard to the husband's income, it may seem to the court to be reasonable.

Permanent alimony and maintenance

37. (1) Any court exercising jurisdiction under Chapter VI may, at the time of passing any decree or at any time subsequent to the decree, on application made to it for the purpose, order that the husband shall secure to the wife for maintenance and support, if necessary, by a charge on the husband's property, such gross sum or such monthly or periodical payment of money for a term not exceding her life, as having regard to her own property, if any, her hssband's property and ability and the conduct of the parties, it may seem to the court to be just.

(2) If the district court is satisfied that there is a change in the circumstances of either party at any time after it has made an order under sub-section (l), it may, at the instance of either party, vary, modify or rescind any such order in such manner as it may seem to the court to be just.

(3) If the district court is satisfied that the wife in whose favour an order has been made under this section has remarried or is not leading a chaste life, it shall rescind the order.

Custody of children

38. In any proceeding under Chapter V or Chapter VI the district court may, from time to time, pass such interim orders and make such provisions in the decree as it may seem to it to be just and proper with respect to the custody, maintenance and education of minor children, consistently with their wishes wherever possible, and may, after the decree, upon application by petition for the purpose, make, revoke, suspend or vary, from time to time, all such orders and provisions with respect to the custody, maintenance and education of such children as might have been made by such decree or interim orders in case the proceeding for obtaining such decree were still pending.

Enforcement of and appeal from decrees and orders

39. All decrees and orders made by the court in any proceeding under Chapter V or Chapter VI shall be enforced in like manner as the decrees and orders of the court made in the exercise of its original civil jurisdiction are enforced and may be appealed from under the law for the time being in force :

Provided that every such appeal shall be instituted within a period of ninety days from the date of the decree or order.

Application of Act 5 of 1908

40. Subject to the other provisions contained in this Act, and to such rules as the High Court may make in this behalf, all proceedings under this Act shall be regulated, as far as may be, by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

Power of High Court to make rules regulating procedure

41. (*1*) The High Court shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, make such rules consistent with the provisions contained in this Act and the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, as it may consider expedient for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of Chapters V, VI and VII.

(*2*) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of of the foregoing provision, such rules shall provide for,—

(*a*) the impleading by the petitioner of the adulterer as a co-respondent on a petition for divorce on the ground of adultery, and the circumstances in which the petitioner may be excused from doing so ;

(*b*) the awarding of damages against any such co-respondent :

(*c*) the intervention in any proceeding under Chapter V or Chapter VI by any person not already a party thereto :

(*d*) the form and contents of petitions for nullity of marriage or for divorce and the payment of costs incurred by parties to such petitions : and

(*e*) any other matter for which no provisions or no sufficient provision is made in this Act, and for which provision is made in the Indian Divorce Act, 1869.

CHAPTER VIII

MISCELLANEOUS

Saving

42. Nothing contained in this Act shall affect the validity of any marriage not solemnized under its provisions ; nor shall this Act be deemed directly or indirectly to affect the validity of any mode of contracting marriage.

Penalty on married person marrying again under this Act.

43. Save as otherwise provided in chapter III, every person who, being atthe time of married, procures a marriage of himself or herself to be solemnized under this Act shall be deemed to have committed an offence under section 494 or section 495 of the Indian Penal Code, as the case may be, and the marriage so solemnized shall be void.

Punishment of bigamy

44. Every person whose marriage is solemnized under this Act and who, during the lifetime of his or her wife or husband, contracts any other marriage shall be subject to the penalties provided in section 494 and section 495 of the Indian Penal Code, for the offence of marrying again during the lifetime of a husband or wife, and the marriage so contracted shall be void.

Penalty for signing false declaration or certificate

45. Every person making signing or attesting any declaration or certificate required by or under this Act containing statement

which is false and which he either known or believes to be false or does not believe to be true shall be guilty of the offence described in section 199 of the Indian Penal Code.

Penalty for wrongful action of Marriage Officer

46. Any Marriage Officer who knowingly and wilfully solemnizes a marriage under this Act—

(*1*) without publishing a notice regarding such marriage as required by section 5, or

(*2*) within thirty days of the publication of the notice of such marriage, or

(*3*) in contravention of any other provision contained in this Act.

shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

Marriage Certificate Book to be open to inspection

47, (1) The Marriage Certificate Book kept under this Act shall at all reasonable times be open for inspection and shall be admissible as evidence of the statements therein considered.

(2) Certified extracts from the Marriage Certificate Book shall, on application be given by the Marriage Officer to the applicant on payment by him of the prescribed fee.

Transmission of copies of entries in marriage records

48. Every Marriage Officer in a State shall send to Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages of the State at such intervals and in such form as may be prescribed, a true copy of all entries made by him in the Marriage Certificate Book

since the last of such intervals, and, in the case of Marriage Officer outside the territories to which this Act extends, the true copy shall be sent to such authority as the Central Government may specify in this behalf.

Correction of Errors

49. (*1*) Any Marriage Officer who discovers any error in the form or substance of any entry in the Marriage Certificate Book may, within one month next after the discovery of such error, in the presence of the persons married or, in case of their death or absence, in the presence of two other credible witnesses, correct the error by entry on the margin without any alteration of the original entry and shall sign the marginal entry and add thereto the date of such correction and the Marriage Officer shall make the like marginal entry in the certificate thereof.

(2) Every correction made under this section shall be attested by the witnesses in whose presence it was made.

(3) Where a copy of any entry has already been sent under section 48 to the Registrar-General or other authority the Marriage Officer shall make and send in like manner a separate certificate of the original erroneous entry and of the marginal correction therein made.

Power to make rules

50. (*1*) The Central Government in the case of a diplomatic and consular officers and other officers of the Central Government, and the State Government, in all other cases may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) In Particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters namely :—

(*a*) the duties and powers of Marriage Officers and the areas in which they may exercise jurisdiction ;

(*b*) the manner in which a Marriage Officer may hold inquiries under this Act and the procedure therefore ;

(*c*) the form and manner in which any books required by or under this Act shall be maintained ;

(*d*) the fees that may be levied for the performance of any duty imposed upo a Marriage Officer under this Act :

(*e*) the manner in which public notice shall be given under section 16 :

(*f*) the form in which and the intervals within which, copies of entries in the Marriage Certificate Book sent in parsuance of section 48 :

(*g*) any other matter which may be or required to be prescribed,

Repeals and savings

51. (*1*) The Special Marriage Act, 1872, and any law corresponding to the Special Marriage Act, 1872, in force in any Part B State immediately before the commencement of this Act are hereby repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding such repeal,—

(*a*) all marriages duly solemnized under the Special Marriage Act, 1872, or any such corresponding law shall be deemed to have been solemnized under this Act :

(*b*) all suits and proceedings in causes and matters matrimonial which, when this Act comes into operation, are pending in any court, shall be dealt with and decided by such court, so far as may be, as if they had been originally instituted therein under this Act.

(*3*) This provisions of sub-section (2) shall be without prejudice to the provisions contained in section 6 of the General Clauses Act, 1897. which shall also apply to the repeal of the corresponding law as if such corresponding law had been an enanctment,

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THE FIRST SCHEDULE

[*See* section 2 (*b*) "Degrees of prohibited relationship "]

PART I

1. Mother.
2. Father's widow (step-mother)
3. Mother's mother
4. Mother's father's widow (step grand-mother)
5. M other's mother's mother
6. Mother's mother's father's widow (step great grand mother)
7. Mother's father's mother
8. Mother's father's father's widow (step great grand-mother)
9. Father's mother
10. Father's father's widow (step grand mother)
11. Father's mother's mother
12. Father's mother's} father's widow (step great grand mother)
13. Father's father's mother
14. Father's father's father's widow (step great grand-mother)
15. Daughter
16. Son's widow
17. Daughter's daughter
18. Daughter's son's widow
19. Son's daughter

20. Son's son's widow
21. Daughter's daughter's daughter
22. Daughter's daughter's son's widow
23. Daughter's son's daughter
24. Daughter's son's son's widow
25. Son's daughter's daughter
26. Son's daughter's son's widow
27. Son's son's daughter
28. Son's son's son's widow
29. Sister
30. Sister's daughter
31. Brother's daughter
32. Mother's sister
33. Father's sister
34. Father's brother's daughter
35. Father's sister's daughter
36. Mother's sister's daughter
37. Mother's brother's daughter

Explanation—For the purposes of this Part, the expression "widow" includes a divorced wife.

PART II

1. Father
2. Mother's husband (step-father)
3. Father's father
4. Father's mother's husband (step grandfather)
5. Father's father's father
6. Father's father's mother's husband (step great grand-father)
7. Father's mother's father

8. Father's mother's mother's husband (step great grand father)
9. Mother's father
10. Mother's mother's husband (step grand-father)
11. Mother's father's father
12. Mother's father's mother's husband (step great grand-father)
13. Mother's mother's father
14. Mother's mother's mother's husband (step great grand-father)
15. Son
16. Daughter's husband
17. Son's son
18. Son's daughter's husband
19. Daughter's son
20. Daughter's daughter's husband
21. Son's son's son
22. Son's son's daughter's husband
23. Son's daughter's son
24. Son's daughter's daughter's husband
25. Daughter's son's son
26. Daughter's son's daughter's husband
27. Daughter's daughter's son
28. Daughter's daughter's daughter's husband
29. Brother

30. Brother's son
31. Sister's son
32. Mother's brother
33. Father's brother
34. Father's brother's son
35. Father's sister's son
36. Mother's sister's son
37. Mother's brother's son.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this Part, the expression "husband" includes a divorced husband.

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THE SECOND SHEDULE

(See section 5)

Notice of Intended Marriage

To

Marriage Officer for the.....District.

We hereby give you notice that a marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, is intended to be solemnized between us within three calendar months from the date hereof.

Name	Condition	Occupation	Age	Dwelling place	Permanent dwelling place if present dwelling place not permanent	Length of residence
A. B.	Unmarried Widower Divorced					
C. D.	Unmarried Widow Divorce					

Witness out hands this———day of————19 .

(Sd.) A.B.

(Sd.) C.D.

—o—

THE THIRD SCHEDULE

(See section 11)

Declaration to be made by the bridegroom

I. A.B., hereby declare as follows :—

1. I am at the present time unmarried (or a widower or a divorce, as the case may be).
2. I have completed.....years of age.
3. I am not related to C. D. (the bride) within the degrees of prohibited relationship.
4. I am aware that, if any statement in this declaration is false, and if in making such statement I either know or believe it to be false or do not believe it to be true, I am liable to imprisonment and also to fine. (Sd.) A. B. (the Bridegroom).

Declaration to be made by the bride

I. C.D., hereby declare as follows :—

1. I am at the present time unmarried (or a widow or a divorcee, as the case may be).
2. I have completed.....years of age.
3. I am not related to A.B. (the bridegroom) within the degrees of prohibited relationship.

4. I am aware that, if any statement in this declaration is false, and if in making such statement I either know or belive it to be false or do not believe it to be true, I am liable to imprisonment and also fine.

(Sd.) C. D. (the Bride).

Signed in our presence by the above-named A.B. and C.D. So far as we are aware there is no lawful impediment to the marriage.

(Sd.) G. H.
(Sd.) I. J.
(Sd.) K- L. } *Three witness*

Countersigned E. E.,
Marriage Officer.

Dated the day of 20

—o—

THE FOURTH SCHEDULE

(*See* section 13)

Certificate of Marriage

I. E. F., hereby certify that on the day of 20 , A. B. and C. D.* appeared before me and that each of them, in my presence and in the presence of three witnesses who have signed hereunder, made the declarations required by section 11 and that a marriage under this Act was solemnized between them in my presence.

(Sd.) E. F.,
Marriage Officer for
(Sd.) A. B.,
Bridegroom.
(Sd) C.D.,
Bride.

(Sd.) G. H.
(Sd., I. J.
(Sd.) K.B. } *Three witnesses*

Dated the day of 20 .

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* Herein give particulars of the parties.

THE FIFTH SCHEDULE

(*See* section 16)

Certificate of Marriage Celebrated in Other Forms

I, E.F., hereby certify that A.B. and C.D.* appeared before me this day of 20 and that each of them, in my presence and in the presence of three witnesses who have signed hereunder have declared that a ceremony of marriage has been performed between them and they have been living together as husband and wife since the time of their marriage, and that in accordance with their desire to have their marriage registered under this Act, the said marriage had this day of 20 been registered

under this Act, having effect as from

(Sd.) E. F.,
Marriage Officer for

(Sd.) A. B.,
Husband

(Sd.) C. D.,
Wife

(Sd.) G. H.
(Sd.) I. J.
(Sd.) K. L.
} *Threr witnesses*

Dated the day of 20 .

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* Herein give particulars of the parties.